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TAGORE



THE VISVABHARATI QUARTERLY

Vol. XI, Part I, New Series

May—July, 1945

The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

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POST-WAR BUSINESS UNDERTAKING

Indian industry in all its branches must have every opportunity of expanding after the War. In fact, the process of industrialisation has already started and before long it is expected to make vital contribution towards the nation's economic well-being.

Post-war conditions will call for a far-sighted policy concerning financial aid the industries may need. The "City" has financed the largest number of national industries and is prepared to consider enquiries from promising undertakings conducted under efficient management.

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THE TWENTY-FIFTH VAISAKH

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

It is the dawn,
Vaisakh the twenty-fifth calls at my door
Bearing my birthday message in its hands,
The sunlit letters of the summer morn.

The rising sun
Reddens the horizon. The dark forest shades
Seem to intone a plaintive *bhairavi*.
The mingled murmuring of many trees
—*Sal, tal* and *sirisha*—

Disturbs the meditation of the woods,
The blood-red paths in the dry fields look like
The paste-marks on an ascetic's broad brow.

Year after year
This day returns to earth in varied forms,
It makes its presence felt from time to time
In mango-groves of burnished gold. It shakes
The bunches of the ripening dates. At noon
It lashes up the dry leaves suddenly.
Sometimes in the mad storm-clouds of *Vaisakh*
It lets itself run riot at full speed
Without restraint. Again it quietly comes,
And sits beside me, bringing offerings,
Hidden beneath its yellow-cloak, from him
Who is lord of my life, and who
Has sent me presents decked with his own hands
—This sapphire plate of sky, on which there rests
Earth's cup with honey-sweetness overflowing.

This day has brought
A conch-shell from the eternal sea, whose sound
Re-echoes in my bosom. The sky-line
Of birth and death which ringed my life around
Has disappeared. A white light overflowing from
The Flute of Time seems to have filled the void.
My soul attuned in every string, vibrates
With the infinite melody of light.


This day descends
 From the edge of sunrise with a calm smile,
 And whispers in my ear : One day thou cam'st
 To this world, midst innumerable others,
 Stainless and fresh, among the scent of flowers,
 Among the rhythm of the dancing leaves,
 Upon the green earth's breast, and underneath
 The steadfast gaze of the blue sky. That same
 New being I've come to waken with a kiss
 Upon thy brow, this brilliant *Vaisakh* morn.
 O Ever-New,
 Let the auspicious moment of thy birth
 Appear again. Buried it lies beneath
 The dusty worn-out leaves of shrunken seconds.
 O new-comer,
 Remember that the first day of thy birth
 Is changeless ;—like unto the waterfall
 That's reborn every minute ; like the sea
 That is revived in waves unceasingly,
 O newly-born, may thy awakening be
 Like fire that springs from ashes dazzlingly.
 O Ever-New,
 Let thy appearance, like the morning sun,
 Roll back all mists. Or like the tender shoots
 —The standard-bearers of victorious spring—
 That fill the empty branches of the forest
 In one swift moment, mayest thou, new one,
 Breaking through arid wastes, thy self reveal,
 Through thee may life's all-conquering be exprest,
 Through thee revealed
 The quenchless wonder of the Infinite.
 The white conch blows upon the sunrise line,
Vaisakh the twenty-fifth
 Calls to the ever-new within my heart.

* [25th Vaisakh is the date of the Poet's birth, according to the Bengali calendar. This poem was originally written in Bengali in 1922. This English translation by Srimati Indira Devi Chaudhurani was first published in *Hindusthan Standard*, 8 May 1945.]

ALPONA OR THE RITUAL DECORATION IN BENGAL

By TAPANMOHAN CHATTERJI

[The author gratefully acknowledges his debt to Dr. Abanindranath Tagore for permission to utilise for this article material from his well-known Bengali treatise on the subject—*Bāṅglār Vrata*.]



THE aspirations of the human heart have no limits. The popular semi-religious usages and different cults are only an expression of these infinite aspirations. *Alpona* is the living symbol of these usages and ceremonies.

First of all, semi-religious ceremonies were instituted to celebrate the changing of the seasons and their influence on human nature ; these cults, once established, developed gradually and were handed down from generation to generation. And now, although the celebrant is not always conscious of it, the influence of the seasons still plays a great part in the festivities.

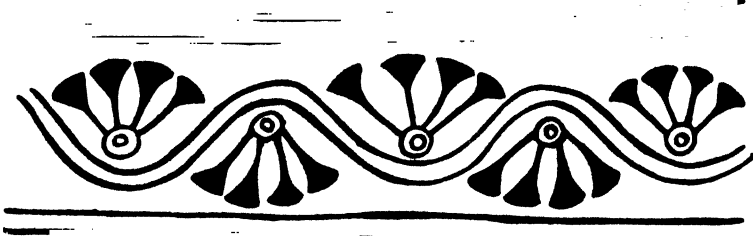
In Bengal the semi-religious cults or *Vratas* as they are called in Bengali, are celebrated by women ; men take no part in them. The art of *Alpona*, therefore, became and remained a domestic art. It is not taught in any school*—the mother teaches it to her daughter in the home, and the daughter passes it on to the grand-daughter ; and thus the art has lived and grown from one age to another. It is essentially a feminine art ; men have not contributed anything to it.

At each popular or family festival of a sacred nature the women set themselves joyfully to decorate with figures and different patterns the floor of the room where the offerings of flowers and fruits will be placed—or the very low seats on which the bridegroom and the bride squat like little gods to be united in love—or even the little wooden throne on which the child waits to receive the name by which it will be known to

* The teaching of *Alpona* now forms part of the curriculum of art education at the Visva-Bharati Kala-Bhavana, Santiniketan. The late Sukumari Devi not only taught it to her students in Kala-Bhavana but considerably enriched it by introducing a large variety of new motifs and designs. The tradition has been ably maintained by Gouri Devi and her students. *Alpona* decoration is an important feature in the celebration of festivals and receptions at Santiniketan.

the world. There is always great rivalry among the women and the girls of the house as to who shall excel in the art.

All these designs had their birth in woman's imagination : there have never been models or implements to help in tracing or painting them. A handful of rice ground up and mixed with water and some vegetable dye are the only materials required, and for a brush simply the dainty tip of a little finger ; and it is in this manner that quite naturally and very easily little girls of five years old draw these *alponas*. With one twist of the hand they will draw creepers, flowers and varied patterns and will even add to them what their whimsical imagination suggests.



In general these women's ceremonies are not consecrated to a special divinity : they are rather a mixture of popular festivals and ritual ceremonies. They paint the human heart in the small space of a little decorative picture, in the action of a drama and in a few songs and hymns, and these contribute to the celebration of the *vrata*. But we do not find their description in any text. These cults live in the secret depth of a woman's soul and from it they emanate in rhythmic forms ever increasing in beauty.

It is difficult to say what has inspired these ritual decorations. Is it the religious sentiment or the artistic feeling innate in human nature ? We are inclined to think that it is the artistic feeling which torments the human heart until it has found its means of expression, although there is always the religious feeling working in the background.

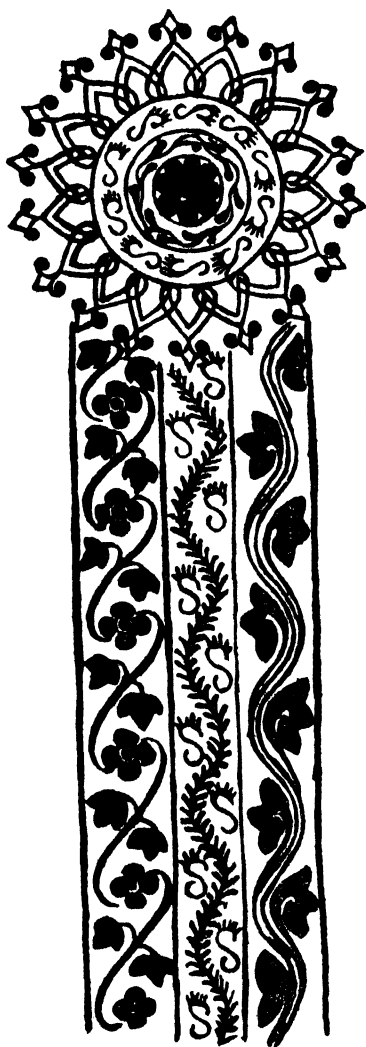
No moral teaching is intended to be conveyed in the celebration of the *vrata* ; it is only meant to give vent to the aspirations of the heart towards beauty and to express them afterwards by *alpona*.

In *alpona* a real power of artistic creation can be discovered : for example, in the different interpretations of the lotus flower and in the many different patterns of flowers and designs. One



KALA-BHAVANA ARTISTS AT ALPONA

feels the strong desire of the artist to idealise the subjects chosen for decoration and to introduce into them what is not strictly necessary to a faithful representation. The lotuses are not the real lotuses we see with the everyday eye—and each one appears different from the other : for it is in the secret depths of the artist's heart that these lotuses of the vision have had their birth, and it is there that they bloom ever fresh.



These *vratas*, although they are being celebrated from far-off ages onwards, come down to us only in fragments. We do not find them in the authoritative scriptures, but only see them being performed by young ladies and girls in villages and towns. They naturally differ in minor details in the various provinces of Bengal. But the main theme always remains the same.

As the art of *alpona* is inspired by the popular religious festivals—and indeed it is the most essential part of them—a brief description of one or two typical *vratas* is given here as specimens.

TOSHLA VRATA : This is the cult of the Corn. This is celebrated so that the fields and meadows may become fertilised and yield more corn.

When the first attacks of winter are beginning to be felt and a pale mist covers the horizon and the fields are covered with little yellow mustard flowers, the matrons of the village go off to the fields bearing little trays of vegetables, fruits and flowers. The ceremony begins with an invocation to the god of cultivated fields.

“Who art thou, O God ! All those who worship thee are for ever happy. Their home prospers from day to day. They have rice in plenty, cows, and means of life.”

Their dark hair unbound waving over their pale yellow garments and yellow flowers in their hands, they thus express their desire :



Grant me cows to fill my stable,
Grant me a son to shine at the court of the King.
Grant me a son-in-law to shine among men,
Grant me a daughter to shine among girls,
Grant me a basketful of vermilion
To shine on my forehead.*
Grant me a home in a fine city,
Grant me to die close to the sea :
Thus we beseech Thee, O God,
To grant that we may live happily
Ourselves, our children and our husbands—all.

This goes on for a whole month, and on the last day the ceremony comes to an end. Before sunrise the celebrants go to the river carrying little earthen trays on which shines the pale and trembling light of a little clay lamp.

They float the little trays in the river. The flames go down the current and vanish, one after another. There follows a little interlude of water sport amongst the girls in the river. The sun rises and smiles over the beaming faces of the devotees fresh from their bath, their cheeks burning with red vermilion and they themselves draped in copper-red robes. And then standing on the river bank they end their worship by singing the praises of the Sun-God ; and their voices quivering with emotion are lost in the luminous atmosphere of the early morning.

MAGHMANDAL VRATA : This is the cult of the Sun-God and is celebrated at the height of winter. The songs and actions in performance of the ceremonies pertaining to this cult take the form of a drama depicting the triumph of the sun dispelling the gloom of the winter months.

* Married women in India always use vermilion paint between the parting of the hair, and it is thus the symbol of married life.

Scene I. The last hours of the winter night. A thick fog covers all nature ; the flowers hang their heads heavy with dew ; the wind bows the grass shoots that caress the surface of the water. On the other side of the lake the misty silhouette of a ruined temple. In the garden little flower-girls who perform these rites play on the banks of the lake ; and the young women of the village sing :

“What flowers shall we pluck

To sprinkle our eyes and our cheeks with water ?”

The flowers reply :

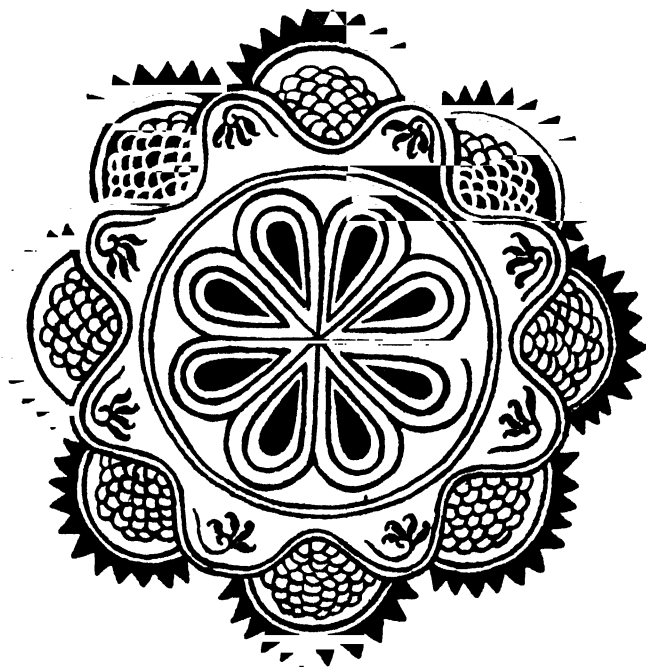
“You must have two slender flowers

Ital and Beetal.”*

From the other side of the lake the temple gardener calls :

“What flowers do you wish

To bedeck your eyes and cheeks ?”



The Flowers :

“You must have two pale flowers

Ital and Beetal.”

The Gardener :

“With what drink

Must I quench the thirst of the flowers ?”

* Imaginary flowers.

The Flowers :

“With the silver dew hidden
In our slender stems.”

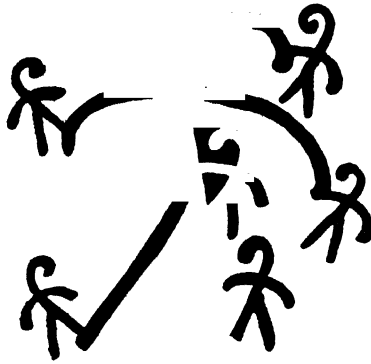
The flower-girls reclining on the dew-covered grass sing :

“The ravens and the crows
Have not yet fouled this water.
We wish to touch this pure water
Before the flowers and the greenery.”

Then they bathe their faces in the clear lake water. The gardener's wife comes up and laughs as she sees them.

The young girls :

“Do not laugh, O gardener's wife !
You are our friend.
We are here
To do honour to *Magh Vrata*.
But where are you going on this festive day
With a basket in your hand ?”



The gardener's wife :

“The branches of the trees are heavy
With all the flowers that have blossomed.”

The flower girls :

“Do not pick the flowers at the top of the tree,
They are still only buds.
Do not pluck the flowers at the base of the tree,
They are full of dust.”

The gardener's wife says to her husband :

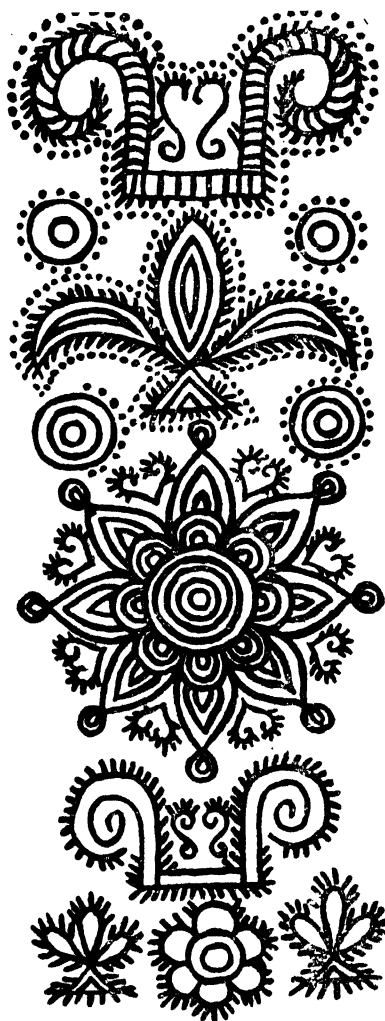
“O Gardener, pluck only the flowers
Which grow in the middle of the tree.”

Then, as if comparing each plant to a kind of house, she adds :

“On what stalk did you cook your food ?

On which stalk did you eat it ?

On which stalk did you spend the night ?”



The gardener replies :

“I cooked my meal

On the jasmine stalk.

I ate my meal

On the *Atasi* stalk.

I spent all night

On the stalk of the marigold.”

Then they all sing together :

“Let us pull down the jasmine branch,

The Sun God wishes for these flowers.

Let us fill the baskets with jasmine,

The Sun God loves these flowers.”

SCENE II. This begins in front of a flowering tree, still all covered with mist. The young girls, with seeds in their hands, sing :

“Rise, O Sun God, rise,

With thy sparkling rays !”

The Sun :

“I cannot rise,

For I fear the dew.”

The gardener's wife :

“Rise then yonder,

Near the stable.”

Several spots are proposed to him in the same way, but the Sun refuses to rise. At last he comes out, piercing the mist, beside the gardener's house, not far from the lake where the sweet flowers float in the stream scenting the air.

A minstrel sings before the grove of the Sun :

“The Young Moon, daughter of Spring,

Of the Spring sweet as honey,

Has unbound her tresses,

And the Sun God goes seeking her
 Through many lands.
 The Young Moon, daughter of Spring,
 Of the Spring sweet as honey,
 Has unwound her sari
 And the Sun God goes seeking her
 From house to house.
 The Young Moon, daughter of Spring,
 Of the Spring sweet as honey,
 Has bells on her ankles,
 Silver bells that shine,
 And the Sun God
 Wishes to wed her."

The girls now begin to narrate the story of the marriage of the Sun God with Young Moon. They are both in a bower of flowers—their nuptial chamber.



The Moon :

"The crows croak,
 And cuckoos sing.
 I am going to thy house
 But who will be my mother ?"

The Sun :

"My mother will be a mother unto thee,
 My father will be a father unto thee,
 My sister will be a sister unto thee."

The Moon :

“The crows croak,
And cuckoos sing,
And I set out for the home of the Sun God.”

Out of the union of the Sun God and the Moon the little Spring God is born, and the celebrants go home happy to see the triumph of the rising Sun.

Alpona is also freely used in connection with family festivals, notably in connection with the ceremonies attendant on a wedding.



These ceremonies are performed in two parts, one at the house of the bride and another at the bridegroom's.

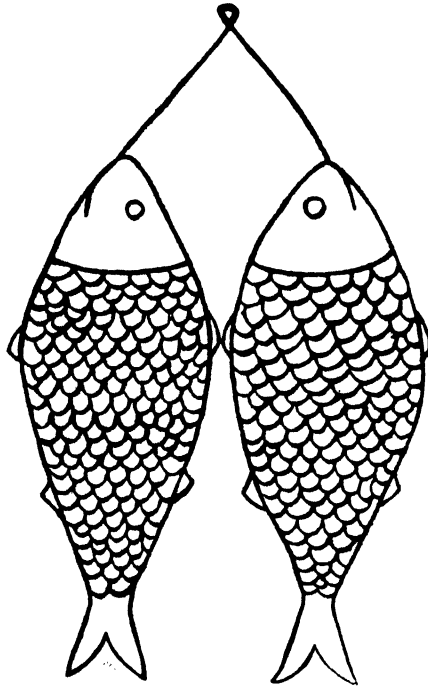
In India marriages are always celebrated in the evening. The young man has to go to the house of his bride, where the giving away ceremony takes place. It begins by the welcoming of the bridegroom, who has to stand on a small wooden seat decorated with the *alponas* whilst the young matrons of the bride's family throw objects of good omen such as flowers, grains, betel-nuts, etc., at him. Only the married women are chosen to perform these ceremonies, no widows or maidens take part in them.

Some small matted trays containing, in little earthen pots decorated with *alponas*, grains, milk, money and other small objects considered auspicious in India and also lighted clay lamps, are brought in and these are waved seven times from foot to head of the young man who has to stand motionless on the seat. The graceful rhythm of the woman's hand and the dim flickering light of the clay lamp together with the solemn incantations wafted by gentle breezes make the heart of the bridegroom quiver with emotion.

This ended, the young man is conducted to a big reception room where the guests have assembled. The floor and the walls of the room are decorated with *alponas* of creepers and lotuses. And

here, in the presence of the guests, the father or the nearest male relative gives away the girl to her husband. The last words uttered by the bridegroom complete the ceremonies :

“Let our hearts be united
In love and in faith.
Let the heart that is mine
Be thine.
Let the heart that is thine
Be mine.”



The ceremonies end with the bridegroom and the bride taking seven steps leading to the bridal chamber. At each step the bridegroom utters a verse of the Scriptures :

“In the name of God take the first step
to find Him and follow me.
In the name of God take the second step
to find strength and follow me.
In the name of God take the third step
for steadfast love and follow me.
In the name of God take the fourth step
for everlasting joy and follow me.



ALPONA BY KALA-BHAVANA ARTISTS

In the name of God take the fifth step
to find the sustenance of life and follow me.

In the name of God take the sixth step
to find wealth and follow me.

For mutual love take the seventh step
in the name of God and follow me."

At the seventh step, the husband offers blessings to his wife :

"Be my loving mate—may I always have your love.

Let not any other woman ever cut the knot of our love.

Let the happy woman bind the knot of our love strong."

In the bridal chamber the bridegroom and the bride exchange sweets, honey and betel, so that their words may be gentle and that they may not stir up discord in the heart of each other.

Another domestic festival with which *alpona* is connected is a sort of christening ceremony. When the child is of six months it is given solid food for the first time, and also its name. This event forms the occasion for a festival. The child, with its head shaved, and dressed in red garb, is placed on a wooden seat decorated with *alpona*, and the child's name is traced on it with decorative Bengali letters. The eldest maternal uncle sits beside the child surrounded by dishes especially prepared for the occasion. He dips his little finger into the various dishes, and lightly touches the baby's lips. Prayers are offered, deities invoked, and the ceremonies end with the guests being sumptuously entertained.

Alpona is also used for the reception of a distinguished guest. The places where the guest sits and dines and the seats used by him are all decorated with *alpona* of lotuses and creepers.

In far-off villages of Bengal remote from modern civilization these *alponas* live and glow anew in the heart of Bengali girls.

The celebrations of the *vratas* show how faith, though seeming false to some, can be expressed in beauty when it comes out from the depths of the heart.

NATIR PUJA

THE DANCING GIRL'S WORSHIP

A Drama by Rabindranath Tagore

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

ACT TWO

The Palace Garden.

Enter LOKESVARI *and* MALLIKA.

Mallika. You have seen your son, Maharani, so why do you still...

Lokesvari. Seen my son? Where was my son? It's worse than death! I never looked for this.

Mallika. What do you mean?

Lokesvari. A son comes to his mother—and is no longer her son. There is no sorrow in the world like that. How strangely he looked at me! As if his mother had disappeared and left no trace. I am completely wiped out! I could never have dreamed of such disaster.

Mallika. They blot out all memory of their birth of flesh and blood, these men, to win that immaculate new birth of theirs.

Lokesvari. Alas for flesh and blood! Alas for its unbearable hunger, its intolerable pain! Is the *tapasya*—the struggle—of our blood and flesh any whit less real than their quest for nothingness—their *sunya*?

Mallika. Say what you will, Devi, I have seen him. What beauty! Like the form of a god, bathed with light.

Lokesvari. With that beauty he put his mother to shame. It was an insult to the mother's love in my heart, the mother's life in my veins. What a gulf between this new birth and the birth I gave him! It's not only different, it's hostile. This is a man's religion, Mallika, I see that clearly now. In this religion the son has no need of his mother, nor the husband of his wife. Yet we women must stay on in our empty homes, with our blasted lives, to give alms to all these home-forsakers, who are neither sons, nor husbands, nor brothers. It's death to us, Mallika, this man's religion; let us fight it to the death!

Mallika. But, Devi, haven't you seen ? It's the women who go in crowds to worship the Buddha.

Lokesvari. They are fools ! There is no end to their appetite for devotion. They worship most whatever hurts them most. I refuse to encourage their folly.

Mallika. These are only words, Maharani. I know very well how it is. This son of yours has left the shelter of your care by one door, but he has entered the sanctuary of your heart by another. The human child has left your lap and is enthroned as a god in your heart.

Lokesvari. Hush, hush, don't talk so. I pleaded with him to spend just one night in his mother's home. He said, "My mother's home has no roof but the sky." If you had been a mother, Mallika, you would understand what terrible words those were. A thunderbolt is a thunderbolt, even in the hands of a god. My breast is a shattered ruin—a hollow emptiness behind my ribs. It echoes, echoes in agony to the cry of those Bhikshus on the road :

*My refuge is in the Buddha,
My refuge is in the Dhamma,
My refuge is in the Sangha !*

Mallika. Why, Maharani, even now you bow your head as you chant those words !

Lokesvari. That's the worst of it, Mallika. This religion of the weak makes folk weak, that is its purpose. It bows the heads that were once held high. It teaches the Brahmin to serve and the Kshatriya to beg. I myself have nourished its poison in my blood, of my own free will, for many days. That is why I fear it now more than you all . . . Who is that coming ?

Mallika. Princess Vasavi ; she is on her way to the place of worship.

VASAVI enters.

Lokesvari. Are you going to the worship ?

Vasavi. Yes.

Lokesvari. But you girls are no longer children.

Vasavi. Why, do we seem to you to behave like children ?

Lokesvari. You infants ! Is it true that you go about proclaiming that non-violence is the highest of creeds !

Vasavi. Those who proclaim it are much older and wiser than we ; we simply repeat their words.

Lokesvari. How am I to make the silly girl understand that non-violence is the religion of the vulgar? Force is what befits the strong arm of a Kshatriya—it is a jewelled armlet, brilliant and cruel.

Vasavi. But is strength never gentle?

Lokesvari. Gentle to pervade and submerge, yes; to bind and establish, no. With pitiless rock the Creator fashioned His mountains, not with mud. Your teacher wants everything to be made of mud from top to bottom. You, a king's daughter, are you not ashamed to believe such nonsense? Answer me, girl.

Vasavi. I am thinking it over.

Lokesvari. What is there to think over? It has happened, before your very eyes. A king's son abandons kingdom and all, at a moment's notice, to cultivate pity for the whole world,—so he says! You heard it, didn't you?

Vasavi. Yes, I heard.

Lokesvari. Then who is left to take up the harder duty of cruelty? If there is none, what fate will befall this earth, this earth which is meant for heroes? An evil fate, I say—endless misery at the hands of these spiritless, lifeless men, with their bowed heads and their fasting bodies. You are Kshatriya girls, Vasavi; do you find my words so strange?

Vasavi. No, they are familiar enough. But all in a single day they have been smothered out of sight—just as the leafless boughs are hidden, when the spring blossom covers the *kinsuka* tree.

Lokesvari. Men grow infatuated sometimes and forget their manhood. But if women allow them to forget it, women must bear the brunt, and for them it spells disaster. Great creepers need great trees for their support. If all the trees were to shrink into shrubs, what would become of the creepers? Well? Why don't you answer?

Vasavi. We need great trees, of course.

Lokesvari. But your Teacher has come to destroy the trees. And that not axe in hand, with the strength of a Parasurama.¹ These soft teachings of his are like maggots. He sets them to eat out the very marrow of manhood. He will wipe the Kshatriya from the face of the earth without a battle. And when his work is done, you

1 ▲ mythical hero or incarnation of Vishnu, who is supposed to have massacred with his axe the Kshatriyas some twenty-one times.

the King's daughters will shave your heads and tramp the roads with your begging bowls ! May you die first—that's my blessing ! [*She pauses*] You do not relish what I say ?

Vasavi. Let me think.

Lokesvari. There is no need to think, you have the proofs. My husband Bimbisara was a Kshatriya king. He held his kingdom as a religious duty, not for pleasure. But this desert wind of a religion has only to breathe its texts in his ear, and down he falls from his royal state like a shrivelled leaf—instead of facing death on the battlefield, sword in hand, as befits a king. What of yourself, Vasavi ? Have you given up hope of being a queen one day ?

Vasavi. No, why should I ?

Lokesvari. Then I ask you, could you respect and marry a king who is shaken on his throne by every breath of this chant of compassion, who holds his sceptre with a half-hearted grasp, on whose brow the emblem of victory is dim ?

Vasavi. No.

Lokesvari. Listen, Vasavi, I'll tell you my own position. King Bimbisara has sent a message that he is coming today and wishes me to be ready to receive him. You think, I suppose, that I shall put on my best in his honour ? What ? Welcome a man who is neither king nor monk, who neither enjoys the world nor renounces it ? Never ! Vasavi, I entreat you, have nothing to do with this shameful, unmanly, self-abasing creed.

[*VASAVI turns slowly away.*

Mallika. Where are you going, Princess ?

Vasavi. Home.

Mallika. But the dancing-girl is almost ready.

Vasavi. Never mind.

[*She goes out.*

Mallika. Listen, Maharani.

Lokesvari. Yes, I am listening. What a clamour !

Mallika. They must have reached the city.

Lokesvari. But hark, the chanting is still going on—*Salutation*. . .

Mallika. But the tone is changed. They are chanting it louder because it has been challenged. There ! Do you hear ?—there's another shout along with it—*Salutation to the Wielder of the Pinaka*.¹ We have nothing to fear now.

1 The bow of Siva.

Lokesvari. The end has come, the end ! When this altar crumbles to the dust, no one will ever know how much of my life has gone with it—how much heart's devotion ! May it be swiftly broken, Mallika. It is built into my heart, and I can endure no more.

[RATNAVALI enters.

Lokesvari. Are you too going to worship, Ratna ?

Ratnavali. Perhaps I don't always give worship where it is deserved, but I never give it where it isn't.

Lokesvari. Then where are you going ?

Ratnavali. I am coming to you, Maharani. I have a petition.

Lokesvari. What is it ?

Ratnavali. If that dancing-girl is allowed to make the offerings here, this palace will be desecrated. I can live here no longer.

Lokesvari. The desecration shall be stopped, I promise you.

Ratnavali. It may be stopped today—and then happen tomorrow.

Lokesvari. No fear of that, daughter ; we will destroy this worship, root and branch.

Ratnavali. Even that will be a poor compensation for all the insults we have borne.

Lokesvari. Make your petition to the king. He may order her to be banished, or even put to death.

Ratnavali. That would only heighten her glory.

Lokesvari. Then what do you want ?

Ratnavali. Bid her dance, low-down dancing-girl as she is, before the very altar where she was to have worshipped as priestess ! . . . You are silent, Mallika. What do you say to that ?

Mallika. It is an interesting suggestion !

Lokesvari. No, I have misgivings about allowing that, Ratna.

Ratnavali. I can see that you still pity that dancing-girl, Maharani.

Lokesvari. Pity her ! I could have her thrown to the dogs, I could watch her torn limb from limb ! I, pity her ! But the altar—the altar which my own hands have served ! Let it be destroyed, I can endure that. But for the feet of a dancing-girl to tread the royal shrine—that I cannot bear !

Ratnavali. Forgive me if I seem impertinent—but if you allow

such painful memories to have their way, the broken shrine may yet be rebuilt upon them.

Lokesvari. That fear is not altogether absent from my mind either.

Ratnavali. You have been deluded into honouring a false creed, and you cannot free yourself from the delusion merely by thrusting it from your mind. Insult it, dishonour it, then you will win your freedom.

Lokesvari. Listen, Mallika, listen to the noise from the north side of the garden. They have broken it, broken it all ! *Salutation...* no, no, let it go, let it be broken !

Ratnavali. Come along, Maharani, let us go and see.

Lokesvari. Yes, yes, I'll come—but not just yet.

Ratnavali. I must go and see.

[*She goes out.*

Lokesvari. O Mallika, what suffering it costs to break these ties !

Mallika. I can see it from your eyes—they are filling with tears.

Lokesvari. Just listen to that—*Victory to Kāli the Terrible !* The other cry has become faint—I cannot bear it !

Mallika. If you merely drive out the religion of Buddha, it will return again. Another religion must take its place, else there can be no peace. Your only hope of consolation is to accept a new creed—from Devadatta.

Lokesvari. Silence ! How dare you ? Don't mention that name in my presence ! Devadatta !—that cruel snake, that worm of hell ! Yes, I took the vow of non-violence, but even then, if hate could burn, I'd have scorched him to the marrow. What !—Call *him* to the throne of my heart ? Give *him* the shrine of my Master—my pure and radiant Master ? [*kneeling and chanting*] Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me all my sins, of thought and word and deed. [*rising*] Do not be afraid, Mallika. The devotee within me shall remain hidden within. Outwardly I am the pitiless one, the royal queen of the land, and no one shall bring me low. I will go and sit in my lonely room. Call me again when the vessel that so long carried my worship is finally sunk—sunk in the stormy sea of dust.

[*Both go out.*

Enter SRIMATI with some women of the palace, bringing the worship offerings, incense, lamps, garlands of flowers, etc. They consecrate each object with appropriate mantras and conch-blasts according to the Buddhist ritual.

All. [*Consecrating the flowers*] With the colour and fragrance of flowers I worship at the lotus feet of the Lord of Sages. [*conch-blasts and obeisance.*

[*Consecrating the incense vessels*] With the fragrant odour of incense I worship the Excellent and Venerable One. [*conch-blasts and obeisance.*

Srimati. [*Consecrating the lamps*] With lighted camphor lamp, the dispeller of darkness, I worship the perfectly Enlightened One, the Light of the Three Worlds, the Destroyer of the Dark. [*conch-blasts and obeisance.*

[*Consecrating the food-offerings*] Accept, O Lord, the food which we offer ; in thy compassion accept our best.

[*kneeling*] I bow to Him the Buddha—to Him who seated under the blessed Bodhi, and putting to flight the hosts of Māra, received enlightenment ; to the Lord of infinite knowledge, supreme in the universe.

[*To her companions*] We have finished the rites for the entrance to the garden. Now let us go to the altar.

Malati. But, Srimati sister, look there ; the path is fenced up.

Srimati. Come along, we can climb over the fence.

Nanda. It looks as though the king forbids it.

Srimati. Maybe, but the Lord commands it.

Nanda. What a terrible roar ! What is it, a revolt ?

Srimati. Let us sing. [*They sing.*

[*Enter a number of female guards.*

Guard. Turn back from here, all of you.

Srimati. But we have come to worship our Lord.

Guard. The service is forbidden.

Srimati. Today is the festival of the Lord's birth.

Guard. The service is forbidden.

Srimati. Is that possible ?

Guard. The service is forbidden—that's all I know. Give up your offerings ! [*Snatches them.*

Srimati. Why should this have happened ? Have I done any wrong ? [*She kneels and chants.*

I bow my head to the precious dust of thy feet. O Buddha, do thou forgive the wrongs I have done in thy sight.

Guard. Silence, stop that chanting !

Srimati. Stopped at the very gate ! Alas, I am unworthy. It is not for me to enter, after all.

Malati. Why are you crying, sister Srimati ? Our worship doesn't depend on rites or offerings. The Lord has been born in our hearts too.

Srimati. You are right, Malati, and more than that, in His birth we are all reborn. It is our own birthday we keep today.

Nanda. But there's a storm of evil brewing fast. Why, Srimati, on this day of all days ?

Srimati. Because this day shall turn all evil into good. What is broken shall be bound up ; the fallen shall rise again.

Ajita. Srimati, I feel sure that it was a mistake to put you in charge of the worship. That is why everything has gone wrong. We ought to have known from the first how it would be.

Srimati. I am not afraid. The temple door does not open to the worshipper all at once. But little by little its bolts are withdrawn. I have no doubts—it is to me that the Master's call has come. The barriers will go down—this very day.

Bhadra. Even the king's barriers ? Are they to give way to you ?

Srimati. The king's sceptre does not reach the shrine.

[RATNAVALI enters.

Ratnavali. I heard what you said—every word of it ! You dare do what the king himself forbids ?

Srimati. The king cannot forbid worship.

Ratnavali. The king cannot ? O really ? Go then and worship, let me see what happens. It will be a feast for the eyes.

Srimati. None will see it, except the Lord who knows the heart. He has taken away all outward things, lest they hide the truth. And now—[*She chants*] *In my words and thoughts, I worship the Tathagata, sleeping and sitting, rising and walking, in all things.*

Ratnavali. Your day has come now ; this pride of yours will be brought to nothing.

Srimati. Amen ; may it come to nothing, and leave no trace behind.

Ratnavali. Now it is my turn ; I must go and make ready.

[*She goes out.*]

Bhadra. I don't like this at all. Clever Vasavi foresaw this, and ran away in good time.

Ajita. I feel afraid.

[*The Bhikshuni* UTPALAPARNA enters.]

Nanda. Where are you going, Holy Mother ?

Bhikshuni. Evil has come upon the city. They have struck at our religion and the Bhikshus are afraid. I am going to chant the Text of Protection through the streets.

Srimati. Won't you take me with you, Mother ?

Bhikshuni. How can I take you ? You know the order—you must conduct worship.

Srimati. Does the order still hold good ?

Bhikshuni. The order holds good until it has been carried out.

Malati. But the king bars the way, Mother.

Bhikshuni. There is nothing to fear, be patient. Those very barriers will make a way for you.

[*She goes out.*]

Bhadra. Listen, Ajita ! On the road ! O what is it ? People wailing ?—or roaring in anger ?

Nanda. It sounds as though they have got into the garden—they are smashing everything to fragments. Quick, Srimati, the Queen's apartments ! We can find refuge there.

[*She goes out.*]

Bhadra. Come along, Ajita, this is some dreadful nightmare.

[*All the princesses go out.*]

Malati. Sister, that sounds like a death-cry, doesn't it ? Do you see that flame in the sky ?—the town is on fire, I think. O why, on His Birthday, this dance of death ?

Srimati. Because birth must march in victory through the royal gates of death.

Malati. I am so ashamed of feeling frightened, sister. I can't bear to be afraid while I'm going to worship.

Srimati. What are you afraid of, my dear ?

Malati. Not of the danger. It's because I can't understand anything, and it all seems dark.

Srimati. You mustn't see yourself from the outside. See

yourself in Him who is born today eternally, and your fears will be blotted out.

Malati. Sing me a song, sister ; that will drive away my fears.

[*SRIMATI sings :*

Leave me no longer in the darkness,

Give me now to see.

My real self in Thee

Give me to see.

Let my eyes be washed in the stream of tears.

Give me to see

[*A woman guard enters.*

Guard. Aren't you going to listen, Srimati ?

Malati. Why are you all so cruel ? Please don't tell us to go away. Why shouldn't you let two girls like us sit on the ground by the garden ?—what harm will that do you ?

Guard. But what good will it do you, either ?

Malati. Lord Buddha came to this garden once ; all its dust, to the very edge, is hallowed by his feet. If you won't let us go in, at least let us sit on this holy ground and keep His birthday in our hearts—we won't even chant a text or offer a flower.

Guard. Why shouldn't you chant a text ? Please do ! Do you think I'm too sinful to be allowed to listen ? The other guards are a long way off. Srimati, do let me hear you sing the Master's praise ; it's an auspicious day and you sing so sweetly. I too am His servant, you must know. When He came to the *asoka* tree, I saw Him with these sinful eyes, and He has been in my heart ever since.

Srimati. *Salutation to Buddha the Sun of Enlightenment !*

Salutation to Gotama the Moon of Peace !

Salutation to the Ocean of Greatness !

Salutation to the Delight of the Sakya's House !

You chant with me, won't you ?

Guard. My lips are too unclean to utter the holy texts.

Srimati. There is love in your heart. Your love will cleanse your lips. Come, join in. [*They repeat the chant together.*

Guard. The burden on my heart is lightened—this day has been a fruitful one. Now let me say what I came to tell you. Get away from here ; I will show you the way.

Srimati. But why ?

Guard. King Ajatasatru has been initiated by Devadatta. He has destroyed the Lord's altar by the *asoka*.

Malati. No, no, sister ! O no, not that ! I've never seen it after all, and now it is all broken ! I was born with an evil star !

Srimati. Why, Malati, what are you saying ? *His* altar can never be broken. It's only what King Bimbisara built that has gone. The Lord's throne needs no stones to give it strength. It is strong in His own splendour.

Guard. The King has issued a proclamation—anyone who brings a lamp for evening worship, or chants the hymn, will be put to death. There is nothing you can do here now, Srimati.

Srimati. I must wait in readiness.

Guard. How long ?

Srimati. Until the call to worship comes—as long as I live.

Guard. O Srimati, I beg of you to forgive me now, beforehand—

Srimati. Forgive you for what ?

Guard. Perhaps, if the king commands it, I shall have to strike you, *you*—

Srimati. Then you must strike.

Guard. The blow may fall on the palace dancing-girl, but as I bow my head before the Lord's handmaiden now, so shall I bow before her then. Forgive me, Srimati.

Srimati. May the Lord give me grace to forgive all blows.

Buddha forgive ! Buddha forgive !

[*Another guard enters.*

Second Guard. Rodini !

First Guard. What is it, Pātali ?

Patali. They have killed Mother Utpalaparna.

Rodini. O, how dreadful !

Srimati. Who have killed her ?

Patali. Devadatta's disciples.

Rodini. So bloodshed has begun. Well, in that case we are armed too. I will not endure such crimes in silence. To strike at the Lord's *Sangha* ! Srimati, forgiveness is no good now. Get yourself a weapon.

Srimati. Don't tempt me, Rodini. I may be a dancing-girl, but even my dancer's hand itches for that sword of yours.

Patali. Then take this one. [*She gives SRIMATI her sword*]

Srimati. [*Trembling and letting the sword fall from her hands*]
No, no ! I have my weapons already from my Master's hand ; my warfare has begun. May violence be brought low, and the Lord have the victory !

Patali. Come, Rodini, we must go and carry the Mother's body to the burning-ground.

[*They both go out.*

[*RATNAVALI enters with a few guards.*

Ratnavali. Here she is ; tell her king's orders.

Guard. This is the king's order, dancing-girl. You must go and dance in the *asoka* garden.

Srimati. Dance ! Today !

Malati. What a thing to say ! Isn't the king afraid to give an order like that ?

Ratnavali. The king afraid ! So it has come to that now, has it ? The sovereign must tremble before his dancing-girl ! The village boor !

Srimati. When is the dance to be ?

Ratnavali. This evening at the time of worship.

Srimati. Before the Lord's own seat and altar ?

Ratnavali. Yes.

Srimati. So be it, then.

[*All go out. Bhikshus enter in procession, singing :*

The world today is wild with the delirium of hatred,
the conflicts are cruel and unceasing in anguish,
crooked are its paths, tangled its bonds of greed.
All creatures are crying for a new birth of thine.
O Thou of boundless life,
save them, rouse thine eternal voice of hope,
let Love's lotus with its inexhaustible treasures of honey
open its petals in thy light.

O Serene, O Free,
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

Thou giver of immortal gifts
give us the power of renunciation
and claim from us our pride.

In the splendour of a new sunrise of wisdom
let the blind gain their sight
and let life come to the souls that are dead.

O Serene, O Free,
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

Man's heart is anguished with the fever of unrest,
with the poison of self-seeking,
with a thirst that knows no end.
Countries far and wide flaunt on their foreheads
the blood-red mark of hatred.
Touch them with thy right hand,
make them one in spirit,
bring harmony into their life,
bring rhythm of beauty.

O Serene, O Free,
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.*

(*To be continued.*)

* The translation of this song is by the author. See *Poems* : Rabindranath Tagore ;
Published by Visve-Bharati, 2 College Square, Calcutta.

REMINISCENCES OF AN ARTIST

“NIVEDITA”*

By ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

THOSE from foreign lands who have ever loved India—among them Nivedita's place is indeed the highest. In her modest dwelling in Baghbazar we would visit her now and then. And what a love she had for Nandalal and my other pupils ! How she would encourage them in their work ! It was she who sent Nandalal to Ajanta to complete his training. It came about this way.

Mrs. Herringham had come to Ajanta and Nivedita suggested to me that I should send my pupils there to help her copy the frescoes. “Such an opportunity comes but seldom. It should never be allowed to slip off. It would benefit both the parties.” And she offered to write to Mrs. Herringham. The latter's reply, however, was rather disappointing. She had already had some artists brought from Bombay, the Bengal artists were unknown to her, they were inexperienced, etc., etc. But Nivedita was not the person to give up once she had made up her mind. She was convinced it would do my young pupils good. So she wrote to Mrs. Herringham again and asked me in the meantime to arrange for their journey. I sent Nandalal and a few others at my own expense. After they had left, however, I began to grow anxious. They were after all inexperienced youngsters and should anything happen to them away from their home in that far-off jungle-infested place—the responsibility was much too heavy. That's how I felt about it. So I ran again to Nivedita and told her what was in my mind. “They are mere boys, as you know, and they have nobody to cook for them, or to look after them.” Nivedita asked me not to worry. She would see about everything herself. And so she did. She at once set about making arrangements for their comfort there. Ganendra Brahmachari was sent to look after them. She

* Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret E. Noble), the well-known English disciple of Swami Vivekananda, first came to India, which she made her home, in 1898. She died in 1911. India owes a deep debt of gratitude to her for the great services she rendered to her cause in various fields of activity—spiritual, social, educational, artistic and even political. It may not be generally known that Gurudeva was actively connected with her work in connection with bustee-cleansing during the first outbreak of bubonic plague in Calcutta in 1899. Gurudeva had also written an introduction to her “Web of Indian life”.

also sent a cook along with him with enough provisions and stores. I felt relieved. But for her, it is doubtful, whether Nandalal and those others could ever have had an opportunity of studying the frescoes at Ajanta. It was a great work she did.

I met her first at the American Consulate—at a reception in honour of Okakura* where Nivedita was also present. She wore the long white robes of the Brahmacharini reaching down to her ankles and she had a string of small *rudraksba* beads round her neck. She verily looked like a statue of the vestal virgin of old done in white marble. The party was in honour of Okakura but the attention of those present was divided between him on one side and Nivedita on the other—two stars in the firmament converging upon one centre, as it were. How else can I describe it ?

Not long afterwards, I saw her again at another reception. It was got up by the Society of Oriental Arts. Justice Holmwood had thrown open his house for the purpose. I had charge of issuing invitations and I sent a card to Nivedita. The party was fairly on when Nivedita arrived—a little late. It was a brilliant gathering. There were Rajas in all their gorgeous fineries and society ladies dressed and coiffured in the height of fashion—wives of high-placed Europeans. There were some noted beauties among them sparkling with jewels and wit and laughter. The programme was interspersed with music and brilliant conversations. Evening was approaching when Nivedita made her appearance—in her spotless white robes adorned with that identical necklace of *rudraksba* beads. Her hair was not quite golden, nor quite blonde either. It was a mixture of both and it was done up high in loose-coiffure fashion. When she stood in the midst of that assembly she looked—how shall I describe it—like the just-risen moon in a star-spangled sky. All the fashionable beauties with all their glamour paled into utter insignificance before the mellow effulgence of her presence. Everybody's attention was rivetted upon her and her alone. Men began to whisper inquiringly. Woodroffe and Blount asked to be presented and I introduced them to Nivedita.

* Kakuzo Okakura, the well-known Japanese savant and interpreter of eastern culture. Author of *The Ideals of the East*, *The Book of Tea*, etc. For an appreciation of him see the article, "Kakuzo Okakura" by Surendranath Tagore, in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. II, Part 2, Aug.-Oct. 1936, p. 65.

They talk of Beauty. I do not know what the general conception of Beauty is. But this I know : that with me Nivedita still stands for Ideal Beauty. To me she was Mahasveta, the poet's creation, carved in moonstone, as it were.

After her death, I secured a photograph picture of her and I used to keep it before me on my table. Lord Carmichael's eyes fell on it one day. He was known to be a man of great artistic taste. Indeed, he seemed to live for Art and Art alone and that was our mutual meeting-ground. He wondered who she might be. On being told, he exclaimed : "So this is Sister Nivedita ? I must have a picture of her—like this." And he quietly pocketted the picture without wasting any more words, without even a by-your-leave ! It was an exact likeness of her—that picture—a fine representation. It represented Beauty in perfection. There was no attempt at any sort of dress or colour effect. It was like a ray of moonbeam resting on snow-clad hill-top. Nivedita's presence had that effect—ethereal, calm and serene. And yet she emanated power. None more so. One felt it in her company and her talk refreshed your soul. She is indeed indescribable. I have not seen her second yet.

[This is an extract from *Jorasankor Dharey* (By Abanindranath Tagore and Ranee Chanda. Published by Visva-Bharati), translated into English by Kanti Ghosh.]



THE REUNION OF RADHA AND KRISHNA

AFTER a hundred years love has come home again,
And the bright day dawns. . . .

Now Radhika's heart is lost in delight
Embracing her long absent lover blissfully.
Nor can her arms unloose him ;
Out of all measure is their mad reunion,
A lark enmeshing the moon in its love, or
He like a bee buried deep in her lotus' cup :
Caught in love's tide, both quiver together
And each is washed away in deathless bliss.
So meet the lover and his beloved once more,
And when their passion's search was ended,
Sitting on the couch at each other's side,
They drowned in their deep rapturous gazes :
So strange beside themselves with still delight
That each one vanished in the other's sight.

Fragrant the cooling night-breeze comes
And the full moon floats blooming over
Head :—Chandidasa bides at their sides,
Love-bewitched, waving a plume fan. . . .

[Translated by Erling Eng and Lalmohon Mookherjee from the original
Bengali of Chandidasa.]

ECONOMIC TRENDS

By K. N. BHATTACHARYA

It is a difficulty common to all human pursuits that while no doubt is held about the goal to be reached, conflicts and doubts arise over the means to be adopted for attaining the desired end. In the field of economic pursuits that conflict has perhaps never been greater than in our own times. While we all seem to agree that the end of economic activities is to provide greatest happiness to the largest number of human beings, it is unfortunate that in practice we are unable to agree upon the means which we should adopt to realise the end. Most countries of the world are at present based on what is called the capitalistic system. Only one big country, but almost a continent by itself, has based its society on socialistic plans. The two groups of countries with different economic systems are ideologically poles asunder. At times they seem to come nearer together, on occasions they draw themselves further away and indulge in violent tirades against each other. Evidently, this is not a very bright picture of human affairs, and sooner or later the conflict will have to be finally resolved. The world can not conveniently choose both, and a harmony will have to be re-established by its going one or the other way.

So far as the capitalist societies are concerned, it is better to admit frankly that they have come to their own impasse. They are faced with contradictions which they are unable to reconcile. The suppositions of the capitalist system are so unreal that they hardly fit in with the complex conditions of modern times. Today it would sound almost fantastic to talk of 'eternal natural laws'. It would be more fantastic to suppose that competition is free and universal, that distribution is determined by what one produces, and production is determined by free market prices. None of these suppositions is true in our own times. The tool of analysis which was useful enough in a comparatively simple condition of economic development is in this age deemed absolutely worthless.

Not only are the suppositions of the capitalist economy unreal, but equally unsound are the rules of conduct which the system enjoins upon the state. It is argued that since capitalism is based on 'eternal natural laws', it should therefore be kept above human

will and interference. Like the Divine Theory of the State of the earlier period, the economic system was also sought to be sanctified with a halo of divinity around it. It was sincerely maintained that capitalism was a delicate self-adjusting mechanism which worked automatically through perfect competition. There was no disharmony in the system and anything which would hinder the free operation of the mechanism would recoil on itself and bring its own frustration. Attempts to control economic phenomena through human laws were fruitless and hence immoral. A great genius, Adam Smith, was the first to initiate this doctrine of economic universalism. Ricardo perfected it, and Marshall revitalised it. For over a hundred and fifty years, the capitalist faith in the universalism of economic laws held its ground and swayed the world.

To us, far removed from the days of Adam Smith, it might appear strange that there could be divine touches in a purely human and secular phenomenon. Not that the last century did not question the divine validity of those 'eternal laws', but what happened was that the initial success of capitalism in the last century was so great that it literally dazed the world and no one paused to answer the doubting minds. Carlyle ridiculed the pursuit of wealth as 'vulgar worship of mammon', and indicted economics as the sordid 'science of lucre'. But Carlyle's was a voice in the wilderness and no one heard him. In a moment of inspired anguish Ruskin asked, "Will money save our soul?" But his question was by-passed and no one answered him. Outside the literary world, a host of critics challenged capitalism on scientific grounds. St. Simon was the first to raise his voice of dissent. Then came Robert Owen. Last, though not the least, came the redoubtable critic Karl Marx. But their voices were barely audible in the almost universal hosanna to capitalism. Throughout the nineteenth century capitalism carried on its triumphant march. Factories grew up, wealth increased, international trade opened up in many directions and the last century felt within itself the surge of a new life. Riches and wealth intoxicated the age and civilisation was synonymous with accumulation of money.

But the war of 1914 completely changed the picture. People were appalled by the misery and suffering which a modern warfare could cause. The economic greed and lust of the industrial nations had brought the European situation to a pass which meant mass

devastation and endless massacre of human lives. Economic universalism had let loose forces which Europe was unable to control. All thoughtful persons realised that in the future reconstruction of societies political security should be preconditioned by economic disarmament which should make future wars impossible.

In this background came the Russian revolution. Never before in history had one single event such great significance as the revolution of 1917. It was a gigantic social experiment which not only affected the lives of millions of people in the country where the revolution took place, but also spread its message far and beyond its own borderland and profoundly influenced the thinking mind all over the world. Many persons genuinely wondered whether the revolution heralded the end of capitalism in all parts of the globe. The end however did not come and the world succeeded in keeping the revolution confined to the country of its origin. For the time being the world contented itself by playing the role of an interested spectator.

But fifteen years later capitalism was again overtaken by a crash in 1931 when the world was faced with an economic depression of an unprecedented magnitude. All over the world industries collapsed, banks crashed, production shrank, international trade dwindled, and with widespread unemployment, the misery and suffering of the poor became almost unimaginable. The failure of capitalism to maintain a balance in the working of its own system paved the way for a fresh onrush of the wave of socialistic ideas, and the world wondered whether the ground was prepared for a second revolution.

The situation was, however, saved by the invention of the technique of what is called economic planning. Planning is a soviet weapon borrowed by the capitalist world to save its own skin. Scientifically speaking, planned capitalism is a contradiction in terms. But the contradiction was necessary to bring back the lost harmony. Through the technique of economic planning normality was practically restored when the second world war broke out in 1939.

The European part of the world war is over. What ravages it has wrought, and what changes it has brought in our sociological perspective, the future historians will record. But one thing is clear. In the field of economics, the old ideas are shattered. The pessimism about the productive efficiency of the Soviet Russia is entirely dis-

pelled. The war-time economic control has brought all important capitalist countries several degrees nearer to socialised planning. Unemployment is an evil which all countries are determined to eradicate, and full employment is declared as their peace-time objective. The preposterous inequality is attempted to be redressed by a re-distribution of national income through social security plans. And lastly, the low standard of living of the vast millions of population, specially of the oriental countries, is recognised as a standing disgrace to civilisation and suggestions are being made to improve their lot through international co-operation.

Full employment, social security, improvement in the standard of living, economic control, and state planning are the dominant notes in the present-day economic thinking. And all these trends lead to one conclusion. The capitalist system is drifting further and further away from the economics of Adam Smith, and casting away all its old moorings. If capitalism has retained its substance, it has changed its form beyond recognition.

But it should also be recognised that if capitalism has undergone changes, so also has Soviet economy. There is no use deluding ourselves with the belief that Soviet economy in practice is the same thing as Socialism in theory and literature. What actually is happening is that if capitalism is being greatly socialised, so also socialism is being equally capitalised. Socialised capitalism, and capitalised socialism, both are on their trial, and for the time being both will have their parts to play. Some day they will come dangerously nearer, and it is extremely unlikely that they will then peacefully coalesce. The difference is fundamental, and perhaps it will require the suffering of another generation and the convulsion of another war to finally resolve the conflict. As has been said before, the world will have to choose one or the other way, it can not have both.

EARLY MEDIEVAL MYSTICISM AND KABIR

By P. C. BAGCHI

KABIR leads among all the mystics of the medieval times. It is not known how far he was influenced by his Guru Rāmānanda. All his sayings and songs have the stamp of an originality not found in any of his immediate predecessors. He exerts also a dominating influence on all mystic poets of later times. Even the Granth Saheb attaches a canonical importance to his poems and incorporates many of them for the use of its followers.

The teachings of Rāmānanda do not seem to have a direct bearing on the profession of Kabir. His religious attitude, so far as we can ascertain from the sayings current in his name, cannot be satisfactorily explained in the light of Rāmānanda's teachings. On the other hand, it may be better understood against the background of early medieval mysticism as propagated by the Jain and Buddhist teachers of the 11th and 12th centuries A. D.

All the Jain mystic writings of this period have not yet seen the light except one small but highly interesting collection of Dohās called *Pāhuda-dohā*, critically edited by Prof. Hiralal Jain. The author of this collection, Muni Rāmasiṃha, flourished some time before the famous Jain scholar Hemachandra, most probably in the 11th century. Its language is Jain Apabhramśa that was in use in Gujrat and Rajputana.

The Buddhist mystic writings of this period are better known. The best known compositions of this class are the old Bengali *Caryāgītis* or *Caryāpadas* and the Dohās in Apabhramśa. They were composed by a class of writers who are generally called Siddhas or Siddhācāryas. The most prominent among them were Luipāda, Kāhnupāda, Sarahapāda, Tillopāda, Bhusukupāda and a few others. They flourished in the 11th and 12th centuries but their influence continued for at least two centuries more through the commentators and the teachings of the Nāthapanthis. It was the latter who carried the old teachings from one corner of the country to the other and satisfied the religious hankerings of the common people, irrespective of their caste and creed. The origin of the sect of these Nāthapanthis is traced to three teachers, Gorakhnāth, Bhatrihari and Gopichānd who also belong to the cycle of Buddhist Siddhācāryas.

Although Kabir speaks of Rāmānanda as his teacher and even

refers to his conversion by the latter at Benares,¹ he more often mentions Gorakhnāth, Bhatrihari and Gopichānd² as people from whom he received his inspiration. He even speaks of having met them, but this should not be taken literally as he lived more than two centuries later than the time of those teachers. It was a sort of mystic union, their common belief being that the Siddhas or the Yogis who had attained spiritual perfection never die.

Whatever the value of Kabir's references to the Siddhas may be, the fundamental principles of his mystic religion as well as the language in which he expresses them have much in common with those of the early writers. Both Kabir and the Buddhist mystic writers are emphatic in denouncing the orthodoxy, the system of caste and the ritualism. Both denounce pilgrimage to holy places and emphasise on the futility of reading the Vedas, Purāṇas and Sāstras. Their common goal is the *Sabaja*, a yogic state which cannot be defined in positive terms.³ It is a state of mind in which all sense of

1 काशीमें हम प्रगट भये हैं रामानन्द चेताए ।

2 अवधु गोरषनाथि जानो (p. 142),

गोरष भरथरी गोपीचंदा,

तव मन सौ मिल करै अनंदा । (p. 99.)

भरथरा भूप भया वैरागी ।

विरह वियोगी वणि वणि दुंढे ।

वाको सुरति साहिव सौ लागी । (p. 189)

See also pp. 199, 200. (All references are to the pages of *Kabir-Granthāvalī* ed. Syam-sundardas.)

8 क्या पढ़िये क्या गुनियै । क्या वेद पुराना सुनियै ।

पढ़े सुनै क्या होई—p. 280

काया मधे कोटि तीरथ, काया मधे कासी । p. 145

कक्षां न उपजै उपज्यां नहीं जानै भाव अभाव विद्वाना ।

उदै अस्त जहां मति बुधि नाहीं.....p. 148

आवै न जाइ मरै न जीवै तासु खोज वैरागी । p. 271

आवागमन होत है फुनि फुनि इहुपर संग न छुटै । p. 279

कबिर ओयाकि गति आस् अलख, अलख लखा नेहि याय ।

For a condemnation of the orthodox rites, cf. *Dohākōṣa*, ed. Bagchi, pp. 14 pp. For the rest cf.—

Luipada—भाव न होइ अभाव न जाइ—

Bhusuka—भावाभाव द्वन्दल दलिया—

Kānhu —अवनागवणे काहु विमना भइला—

Dārīka —अलख लखइ चिए महासुई—

duality disappears. It has neither any positive nor negative character. It is free from the encroachment of the thoughts of the objects and is thus a state of śūnya or 'vacuity'. It is also a state of spontaneous bliss. So far there is a perfect agreement between the Siddhas and Kabir. But Kabir has introduced an element of Bhakti in his mysticism and has at times brought in the conception of Rāma. But this Rāma again is not different from his Sahaja as he also is defined in identical terms. He is without attributes (nirguṇa), vacuity (śūnya), possessed of the character of vacuity (śūnyasvabhāva) and so forth.⁴

The means of attaining this state of Sahaja brings in the question of various practices. Here also there is a perfect agreement between the Siddhas and Kabir. The principal means is a kind of yoga which involves certain amount of physical culture. Hence Kabir speaks of the six different *cakras* or stations within the body and also of the various nerves (*nāḍī*), the most important among them being *idā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā*. For the first two he often uses the names *rayī* and *śaśī*, "the sun" and "the moon" and also *Gangā* and *Yamunā*—terms commonly used by the Buddhist mystics. Like his predecessors, Kabir also sometimes uses the names of holy places to mean the *cakras* or yogic stations within the body.⁵ The highest station within the body is often compared by Kabir with a lotus (*kamala*), a lake (*sarovara*), a place of blissfulness where one drinks the ambrosia and the sky (*gagana*). These are also the terms used by the Buddhist mystics. They also speak of the sky, the lake, and the place of highest blissfulness (*mahāsukha-cakra*).

Some of the common sayings of the Buddhist mystics are found in the writings of Kabir almost in identical language. Kabir says : अन्धे अन्धा ठेलिया दून्यूं कूप पढ़न्त—"When a blind man shows the way to another blind man, both fall into the pit." The same may be traced to the writing of Sarahapāda : अन्ध' अन्ध कड़ाव तिम वेण्णवि कूव पड़ेइ. "When the individual merges into the absolute it is like the salt merging into water" (लवणो जिम पाणीहि विलिज्जइ—). It is then

4 तेरि निर्गुण कथा काहि ; सुख सहज महि बुनत हमारी, P. 272.

5 षट् चक्र, pp. 96, 94, 90,

इडा पिंगला सुषमन वंदे—P. 288

उलटत पवन चक्र षट् भेदे सुरति सुख अनुरागी—P. 271

चंदसूर बिचि तारी लावा—P. 223.

impossible to separate one from the other. Kabir expresses the idea in the same words as those of the Buddhist writers :

मन लागा उन्मन सौ उन्मन मन हि विलग ।

लूण विलगा पाणिआ पाणी लूण विलग ॥

The same simile may be traced to the Upanishads. The Brihadāranyaka for example expresses the ultimate relation of the individual self with the Brahman by the same image but Kabir is certainly drawing upon the early medieval Buddhist writings.

Such use of imageries to explain some yogic experiences are more common among Kabir and the early writers than are usually thought of. One of the Buddhist writers, Bhusukupāda, uses the image of "mouse" which is by nature restless and thievish. In his writing the mouse stands for the vital wind, *manapavana* or *muṣā pavana*. But when this mouse is led by the correct method to the topmost station within the body it loses its restlessness and drinks the nectar. This means that the Yogi then attains a state of supreme blissfulness. But if this mouse is not controlled by the right method it may cause a destruction of the spiritual power. Both Kabir and Bhusuku express the same idea by an identical image in an identical language.

Thus Kabir says :

मन रे जागत रहिये भाइ ।

गाफिल होइ वसत मति खोबे

चोर मुसै घर जाइ ॥

षट् चक्रकी कनक कोठरी

बस्त भाव हइ सोइ ।

ताला कुक्षी कुलफके लागे

उघड़त बार न होइ ।

"Oh brother, mind, keep wide awake. If you are careless you will destroy your real mind. The mouse-thief, is entering the house. The golden chamber of six *cakras* contain the reality. It is barred with lock and key. You will not be able to open it up !"

Let us compare it with what Bhusuku says :

निसि अन्धारी मुसा अचारा

अमिअ भकए मुसा करअ अहारा ।

माररे जोइआ मुसा पवणा ।

जेन तुटअ अवनागमणा ।

भव विन्दारअ मुसा खणअ गाति ।

चञ्चल मुसा कलिआं नाशक थाति ।

“The night is dark, the mouse is active. It eats up the nectar. O yogin, kill this mouse-wind. The distraction in movement will then stop. The mouse brings in the birth and digs a hole. The mouse is restless ; keep yourself ready to destroy it.”

In another Buddhist song it is said :

सासु घरे घालि कोझा ताल ।

चन्द सुज वेणि पखा फाल ॥

“Break the lock and key of the chamber of breath and cut off the two wings, the sun and the moon.”

The chamber of breath is the same as the golden chamber spoken of by Kabir. Both the chambers are under lock and key and unless they are broken it is not possible to attain the right spiritual state of mind.

In another place both the Buddhist Siddha and Kabir use the image of hunting. The hunter (*abedī*) is after the deer (*mriga*) which stands for the *manapavana*—the vital wind in its restless state. The killing of the deer means the destruction of the restless condition of mind. This alone can lead to the highest knowledge. Kabir describes the plight of the deer in the hands of the hunter thus :

अहेड़ी दोँ लाइया मृग पुकारे रोइ ।

जा वन मइं क्रीला करी, दाफत हइ वन सोइ ॥

“The hunter has set fire to the forest, the deer cries aloud ; the very forest in which I gambol is burning.”

The Buddhist Siddha Bhusukupāda describes it in the following words :

काज हरिणी मेलि अच्छहु कीस ।

वेड़िल हाक पड़अ चौदीस ।

“The hunters surrounded the body-deer, there was shouting on all sides.”

ए वन छाड़ी होहु भान्त ।

“The deer tells the roe—let us go away from this forest.”

जइ तुम्हें भुसुकु अहेड़ी जाइवे मारिहसि पञ्चजना—

“If you Bhusuku go a hunting kill the five.”

The image of an inner music is very familiar with Kabir. It is a spontaneous note (*anāhata nāda*). This note is produced on a peculiar musical instrument. The sun and the moon (the two nerve currents which ordinarily bring about the sense of duality) are converted into the gourd (*tumbā*), the mind or consciousness is the

wooden board (*dāṇḍī*) and the *suṣumnā* (the middle nerve current which leads to the removal of the sense of duality) is the string (*tantrī*). When this instrument is completed it starts producing a divine music composed of 32 notes. The music resounds in the sky (the topmost station within the body). Thus Kabir says :

चन्द सूर दोइ तुम्बा करिहुं
चित चेतनि कि दाण्डी ।
सुष्मन तन्ती वाजन लागी
इहि विधि तृष्णा षाण्डी ॥

“The sun and the moon are to be converted into the gourd, and that which awakens the mind into the wooden board. The string is the *suṣumnā* which starts the music. The worldly desire is rendered ineffective by it.”

And again in another place :

जंजी जंत्र अनूपम वाजइ ।
ताका शब्द गगन मई गाजइ ॥
सुरकी नलि सुराति का तुम्बा ।
सत्गुरु साज बनाया ॥

“The musician is playing on a wonderful instrument. Its music resounds in the sky. It is then a board of *sura*, a gourd of *surati* and it is ideal Guru who perfects the instrument... it has thirty-two notes.”

In the Buddhist mystic writings also there are references to this musical instrument and the *anāhata* note. One of the writers, Viṇāpāda, however expresses it more fully than others in the following words :

सुज लाउ ससि लागेलि तान्ती ।
अनहा दाण्डी एकि कोअत अवधूती ।
वाजइ आलो सहि हेरुह वीणा ।
सुन तान्ति धनि बिलसइ रुणा ॥...
जवे करहा करहकले चापिउ ।
व तीश तान्ति धनि सएल बिआपिउ ॥

“The sun is the gourd, the moon is the string. The board is the *anāhata* and the *avadhūtī* (*suṣumnā*) puts all of them together. Listen, Oh friend, the music of the Viṇā of Heruka (vacuity). Listen, the music of the instrument is sweet. . . . When the stick presses on the fret, thirty-two notes spread everywhere.”

Both Kabir and the Buddhist mystic writers use the image of elephant to explain the state of *samādhi*. It is a state when the Yogi attains a state of bliss and drinks the nectar. The mind once directed through the right channel straightway runs towards the goal—the topmost station. It is the lotus forest of *sahaja* knowledge which he enters and drinks the nectar in order to satiate himself. The elephant stands for “the mind”. When he gets the taste of ultimate reality (*tathatā*) he rushes towards the goal like one in rut. The arrival at the goal is expressed by the symbol of union between the elephant and his mate. Let us see how Kabir expresses this mystic union :

सुरति पियास सुधारसु अमृत एहु महारसु पेउरे ।
 निरभ्रर धार चुअउ अति निर्मल इह रस मनुआ रातोरे ।
 कहि कबीरा सगले मद छूँछे इहइ महारस साचोरे ।
 कालवृत्त कि हस्तनी मन बौरा रे चलत रच्यो जगदीस ॥

“Drink this *mahārāsa*, this nectar, this honey which quenches the thirst of love. It flows incessantly, it is pure ; O, mind get attached to it. Kabir says—this *mahārāsa* which is alone true flows down in force, the elephant is mad for the mate—”

The Buddhist mystic Mahīdhara expresses the idea thus :

मातेल चिअ गअन्दा धावइ ।
 निरन्तर गअणन्त तुसैं (?) घोलइ...
 महारस पाने मातेल रे तिहुअण सअल उएखि ।

“The mind, the elephant king, gets drunk and rushes and roams about at the end of the sky. . . sets to drink the great wine after ignoring all worldly things.”

Another Buddhist mystic, Kāhnupāda, uses the same image to express the same idea :

काहु विलसइ आसव माता ।
 सहज नलिनी वन पइसि निविता ।
 जिम जिम करिणा करिगिरैं रिसअ
 तिम तिम तथता मदगल बरिसअ ॥

“Kāhnu roams about fully drunk with wine and feels satiated in the lotus forest of *sahaja*. Just as the elephant in rut wants the company of the mate in the same way the reality showers its wine.”

Both Kabir and the Buddhist mystics are fond of using almost similar paradoxes in order to express some deep yogic experiences. Thus Kabir says : "The mouse fights with the elephant but nobody can see it. The mouse enters the hole and fights with the serpent and swallows it up." Elsewhere he says : "Try to know your own nature and remain alone. It is like the son of a sterile woman, the wife without having a husband. . . the sprout without the seed. . . ." And again : "The water of sea burns the whole forest and the fishes go ahunting," and so forth. Similarly we get paradoxical statements in the Buddhist Caryāpadas : "It is impossible to hold the pail after milking the tortoise. The crocodile eats up the tamarind from the tree. . . ." "My house is in the centre of the city but I have no neighbours. There is no rice in my kitchen pot but I feed the guests at all hours. The milked milk enters the teat of the cow. The frog fights with the snake and wins a victory. The ox gives birth to a calf but the cow remains sterile. The ox is milked three times a day. . . ," etc.⁶

It is I believe needless to carry on the comparison further. I hope it is clear from what I have said that there is a close agreement between Kabir and the Buddhist mystics of the 11th-12th centuries, not only in the general religious attitude but also in the language employed by them to express it. Both the Buddhist mystic and Kabir

6 Kabir—

मुसा हसती सौँ लड़े, कोइ विरला पेखे ।
 मुसा पैठा बाँवि मे, लारै सापनि धाइ ।
 डलटि मुसै सापनि गिली.....p. 141
 अपणें रूप कौँ आपहि जाणें, आपै रहै अकेला ।
 बाँझका पूत बाप बिना जाया...
 बीज बिन अङ्कुर... p. 140
 सायर जलै सकल बन दामै, मँछ अहेरा खेलइ p. 91

Of. Buddhist caryā—

दुलि दुहि पिठा धरण न जाइ ।
 रुखेर तिन्तिङ्गी कुम्भोरे खाइ ।
 टालत मोर घर नाहि पङ्क्तिवेषी
 हाङ्कित भात नहि निति आवेशी ।
 दुहिल दुधु कि वेण्टे समाय ।
 वेङ्ग साप सम वङ्गिल जाय ।

consider the worldly existence as a sort of dream, an existence devoid of reality.⁷ This distinction between dream and reality may be understood not by the conventional methods as described in the Vedas and Sāstras but by a progressive mental culture. It involves certain yogic practices which help to bring about a retroversion of all the faculties of the senses, a withdrawal from the exterior objects. Once it takes place, the yogi is in a state of *sahaja*—it is the state of nature not in the ordinary sense but in the ultimate sense. He has then gone back to the source of reality from which he can distinguish this world of dreams from the world of reality.

It is thus clear that Kabir had drawn upon the mystic lore of earlier times. He might have attempted at a synthesis between the Ramaite Bhakti cult and the earlier Buddhist mystic *śūnyavāda*, but even in this synthesis the latter predominates. Rāma merges into śūnya, vacuity, which simply means an attributeless state of reality. We have therefore to study Kabir not within the limits of the Rāmānanda sect but against this wider background of early medieval Buddhist and Jaina mysticism.

7 जग जीवन ऐसा सुपने जैसा जीवन सुपन समान—p. 285

Cf. Kāhnupāda—

स्वपने मइ देखिल तिहुवण सुण

गन्धपरसरस जइसौ तइसौ ।

निंद विहुने सुइना जइसौ ।



My love longs to offer its worship

in splendour
but poor are its vessels,

and I ever wonder why were
I not made like a forest

that opens its
heart in

flowers, like
a star that

speaks in a
speech of
flame?

Rabindranath Tagore

15th March

1929

MEDIAEVAL BENGALI CULTURE

A Socio-Historical Interpretation

By Dr. NIHARRANJAN RAY

THE early dawn of the 13th century saw the sudden raid on Nudiya (Navadwipa) by Muhammad Bakhtyar and the almost consequent flight of Lakshmaṇasena, the last great Sena king, to Vikramapura in Eastern Bengal. Muhammad sacked the city and left it in desolation and repaired to Lakhnauti in Gaud which he made his capital. He does not seem to have come any more into conflict with the Senas, but appears to have led an unsuccessful and disastrous expedition to Tibet that was followed shortly by his death. It is difficult to understand why Muhammad after having secured his footing in Southern Bengal chose Lakhnauti to be the seat of his power and government; in any case, early Muslim rule in Bengal does not seem to have made itself felt anywhere outside Northern and Western Bengal.

There is evidence to suggest that Lakshmaṇasena survived for at least a few years the raid on Nudiya. Eastern and Southern Bengal continued to be under the suzerainty of the successors of Lakshmaṇasena for at least another half a century when the realm, Eastern Bengal at any rate, passed into the hands of a family of kings whose surname was Deva and whose last king was Arirāja-Danuja-Mādhava Daśaratha, *alias* Danuj Rai, a contemporary of Ghiyasuddin Balban and Tughril Khan. The seat of government of Danuj Rai was at Suvarṇagrām, or Sonargaon, not very far from Dacca. The reign of this king, who seems to have been a very powerful one, brings us to about the end of the 13th century. Throughout the century the struggle with the Muslim rulers of Gaud had continued with interruptions, and though the aliens might have occasionally gained some short-lived successes, they could hardly secure any permanent footing in Eastern and Southern Bengal where minor ruling chiefs, taking advantage of the prevailing confusion, succeeded in asserting their independence. Even North and Western Bengal could not have been occupied without opposition and the nature of the occupation seems to have been rather limited; it indicates that only small parts of the country round about Lakhnauti came under direct Muhammadan occupation and that too had to be

maintained through constant struggle with powerful Hindu interests. The last half of the 13th century, moreover, saw Lower or South Bengal harassed by intensive Magh raids, from Arakan. Lakhnauti's relations with the Sultanate of Delhi in the 13th century was, to begin with, one of constant quarrels, then of acceptance of the central suzerainty and finally, towards the middle of the 14th century, one of complete independence; but even when the Delhi authority was acquiesced in, suspicion and grave distrust of one another was the undercurrent that ever was a menace to the peace and good government of the realm. The Muslim courts earlier at Lakhnauti and later, in the 14th century, also at Suvarṇagrām in Eastern Bengal or Saptagrām in Southern Bengal were centres of deepest political and military intrigues leading to quick change of dynasties, administrative chaos and social anarchy and confusion, at least in the capital cities and amongst the Muslim nobility and military aristocracy whose number could not yet have been certainly very large.

Towards the middle of the 14th century the governors of Bengal rebelled against the authority of Delhi and declared their independence, and a few years later Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah for the first time brought almost the whole of Bengal under one Islamic political domination (1358). The Islamic occupation of the country was by now complete. The rule of the Ilyas Shah dynasty lasted till almost the end of the 15th century with an interregnum of about half a century when the Lakhnauti power was seized by Rājā Gaṇeśa, a Hindu landlord who was succeeded by his son Yadu, converted to Islam under the name Jalaluddin Muhammed Shah (1409-1442). During the last years of the 15th century, the Lakhnauti court became the seat of cruel and murderous intrigues by Abyssinian slaves who for a time wielded power from the throne and ushered in a state of anarchy and confusion in the country. From this hapless state the country and the people were redeemed by the power and genius of Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah whose dynasty ruled over Bengal for about half-a-century (1486-1538). It was under the aegis of this dynasty that Bengal after more than two centuries and a half found time and opportunity for the cultivation of the arts of peace and social stability and the country witnessed a socio-religious upheaval the like of which she had not seen for centuries and the effects of which were far-reaching and abiding, at least for several centuries. This was the

great Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava movement inaugurated by Śrī-Chaitanya, with Navadvīpa as its centre. But before we reach this stage in the history of the country, it is necessary to take a glimpse of the sociological transformation of the country brought about by historical process of about three centuries of Islamic domination of the realm. An understanding of this sociological background is almost imperative for a correct appreciation of the culture of Bengal of the mediaeval period.

The Senas, it is well known, came originally from Kārṇāṭa and their active zeal for and patronage of orthodox Brahmanism with all its rigid rituals and still more rigid codes of social behaviour is now a recognised fact of history. Sociologically, the Brahmanism fostered and patronised by the Senas was of a conservative and almost reactionary character; it was antagonistic to Buddhism, as we know it in its later phases in Bengal. It was indeed antagonistic to all liberal tendencies in social behaviour; and Vallālasena and his successors saw a new social ideology and organisation, based on the so-called purity of caste and conduct, rigid religious rituals and all-round Brahmanical orthodoxy, pushed through almost with a totalitarian emphasis with the help of such Brahmanical writers of *smṛiti* texts as Bhavadeva Bhaṭṭa, Śūlapāṇi and Halāyūdhā. All rebels were relentlessly dealt with and pushed to the lower grades of the social ladder and prohibited relationships with the upper grades, unhistorically recorded or vulgarly remembered in later genealogical traditions as *kulins* and their orthodox Brahmanical affiliation as *kulinism*. The strongest hold of this orthodoxy was Bengal west of the Ganges at least upto the southern bank of the Ajay with its citadel presumably at Navadvīpa that Bakhtyar sought to storm by surprise or seize on the sly. The more east and north the country lay from the centre of Brahmanical orthodoxy lesser was, and even today is, its grip on the social organisation, which explains the more liberal sociological outlook of the upper grades of the society in Northern and Eastern Bengal and even in Lower or South Bengal. The fact that of all places in Eastern Bengal, upper grades of Vikramapura and certain tracts of Bakarganja claim social precedence over the rest is easily explained by the transference of Sena court and centre of administration and therefore the heart of Sena social ideology and organisation to Vikramapura after Bakhtyar's raid on Nudīya. Northern

Bengal, i. e. Varendra, or Barind of Muhammadan writers, was in those days and even uptill a few centuries later, a contiguous tract of country with Rāḍha or Western Bengal—the land-configuration of both the tracts are the same,—and close proximity was to a very great extent responsible in drawing the upper grades of the Varendra social organisation within the orbit of Sena social ideology.

When Bakhtyar seized Nudiya, the latter was evidently the seat, not only of Sena power but also of Brahmanical orthodoxy, and an alien military adventurer must have felt out of tune with the general atmosphere of the place which was probably the reason for choosing Lakhnauti as the centre of the new administration. Western Bengal presumably remained within Lakhnauti's fold that gradually tried to spread its grip first over Northern Bengal and then, as time went on, over South and Eastern Bengal. Buddhism and Buddhist communities were already at disfavour with the Court and the upper grades of the society during Sena domination, and when Islam came with its initial hatred and suspicion of both Brahmanism and Buddhism—they were undistinguishable to the followers of the Prophet,—a large number of Buddhist monk-scholars fled to Nepal, Tibet and Burma and perhaps also to Orissa, but the majority of them and lay Buddhist communities went underground where they moved freely in the midst of popular tribal and rural cults and other gods and goddesses, the followers of the Nātha cult, and other members of the popular non-hieratic pantheon that had their sway over the minds of the larger mass of the people in the cities and villages, who were outside the pale of the hieratic Brahmanical social organisation. If this was the transformation through which Buddhism trod its path, orthodox Brahmanism, after Muhammadan occupation, sought its survival in an altogether different historical process. It raised strong walls on all its sides and sought a sheltered existence, away from all contacts not only with an alien rule but also with the lower grades of society that constituted the bulk of the population. Contemporary or almost contemporary sources state that the Brāhmaṇas at this period took to the practice of the tortoise sheltering itself within its own shell (*kurmavṛitti*). This attitude stopped the slow process of filtration of upper class hieratic socio-religious ideas and practices to the lower grades of the society and raised an almost insuperable barrier between the two. In more senses than one the general mass of the population

found in this attitude of the Brahmanical hierarchy a kind of social release. To some of them Islam with its more democratic appeal on the social plane and a simpler code of tenets on the religious, along with the easy temptation of favours at the disposal of the ruling class and their proselytising zeal, opened up an inviting vista, while to a limited number at least it proved to be a haven from religious and social persecution by the upper classes. In any case a very large number of Buddhists and other non-hieratic communities who had been more numerous in Eastern Bengal must have found in Islam a safe asylum. The Brahmanical orthodoxy, on the other hand, sheltered complacently within its own shell, went on weaving patterns round Sastric texts, interpreting *ad nauseam* interpretative texts themselves, compiling treatises on logic, astrology, grammar, rhetoric, etc, and formulating more and more rigid socio-legal texts, till at last they found themselves lost in the most abstruse but barren intellectual gymnastics that gradually developed into what came to be known as *Navyanyāya*. The centre of this sheltered and self-complacent existence was of course Navadvīpa in Western Bengal, but Vikramapura also came to be another important centre along with others that became more or less, ideologically speaking, replicas in smaller scale of Navadvīpa itself. But this is anticipating events. As for Navadvīpa, it was even in 1485, the year of Śrī Chaitanya' birth, a great centre of Brahmanical learning, swarming with scholars of Śākta and Bhāgavata affiliations (c. f. *Chaitanya-Bhāgavata* of Brīndāvana Dāsa). To what degradations social morals amongst a large number of these Brāhmaṇas had sunk will be evident from the anecdotes in respect of Jagāi and Mādhāi as related in the *Chaitanya Mangal* of both Jayānanda and Lochan Dāsa. Navadvīpa, and later also Bhāṭpārā (sans. Bhāṭṭapāṭaka or Bhāṭṭapalli) successfully maintained the reputation of being centres of Brahmanical orthodoxy throughout the mediaeval period and do even today to a very great extent.

The direct and indirect effects of an alien domination, at its early stages, on the creative arts and literature of the realm can easily be guessed. Art and literary activities that we know of during the period of Pāla and Sena domination, more during the domination of the latter, were to a very large extent dependent upon the patronage of the court, the nobility, the commercial and propertied classes. Elsewhere

has been pointed out how their hieratic class ideology has been fully reflected in contemporary art and literature. Now with the advent of Islam, the court passed into alien hands, and the old nobility was gradually replaced by a new and alien one. There are indirect evidences to suggest that the commercial classes were already at disfavour and at a disadvantage even during the rule of the Senas ; now an alien court that brought in political anarchy and confusion, which dragged on for decades after decades, must have spelt disaster to their vocations. Nor were the propertied interests safe ; intermittent plunder of amassed fortune, quick change of dynastic authority and general political anarchy and confusion gave a rude shaking to the sense of social security and stability that is ever the foundation of property. Very naturally, therefore, the arts and literature that flourished mostly on the patronage of these interests suffered a great set-back, so much so that throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there is hardly any evidence worth mentioning of any product of the art and literature of the realm that can with any amount of certainty be assigned to this period. A few pieces of stone sculpture that seek to keep to canonical injunctions but artistically crude and barren and a few literary specimens of doubtful chronology are all that survive today to meet our gaze. A stunning blow seems to have silenced all creative activity, a waft of a sweeping gale blew out the burning lights !

But life of the ordinary men, i. e. the people in the villages and towns away from the seats of power and profit went on, though not wholly in the usual way, at least more or less undisturbed by the moving events of political history and dynastic intrigues of the surface. Villages and smaller towns were more or less self-contained social and economic units, and in spite of a handful of hieratic cults and class-interest, the bulk of the people went about not only their daily round freely mixing among themselves, but mingling their tribal and primitive gods and goddesses and their social and religious ideologies, irrespective of their respective affiliations and irrespective of the cults and cult ideologies of the upper grades of the society. No untouchability and social exclusiveness complex ever deflected their life's own course that assimilated all the streams touching and affecting their day to day toil with the hard facts of reality. In the process of this assimilation gods and goddesses of Pauranic Brahma-

nism became transformed into hard realities of life. This transformation did not take place in a day, but was effected slowly and steadily in course of centuries. The results came up to the surface only in later times ; nevertheless Śiva of the Pauranic pantheon became an average householder, indolent and indifferent, drug-addict and whimsical, with Annapūrṇā, his wife, constantly coaxing him to the life of an active agriculturist that an average Bengali peasant ever was ; and as such was sung in hundreds of village huts and commemorated in a verse series known as *Sivāyana*. Likewise Annapūrṇā became the average mistress of the average household, the dispenser of food and daily requirements of her countless sons, and as such came to be treasured in thousands of hearts, giving rise to another verse-series known as *Annadāmangal*. No less with Chāṇḍī, the fearful goddess who came to be propitiated in a third verse series known as *Chandīmangal*. All these came in later times to be tinged with Pauranic Brahmanical elements which were re-asserting themselves after the shaking of the great Chaitanya movement, but even so hieratic Brahmanism had undergone a great change and was given a new form and meaning by the large mass of the people who were outside the direct pale of Brahmanical hierarchy. But neither Śiva nor Annapūrṇā or Chāṇḍī were the divinities that monopolised their religious vision and outlook. The gods *par excellence* of the lowermost grades of the people were Manasā or Vishahari, Dharma, Sūnya, the abstraction of a philosophy un-Brahmanical in content and character, the various totems and animistic divinities of different tribal peoples, goddesses like Shashṭhī, Bāśulī and Śitalā, etc. Even at Navadvīpa of Chaitanya's boyhood, the two important goddesses that almost monopolised the worship of the ordinary people were Manasā or Vishahari and Maṅgal Chāṇḍī, the benign aspect of the fearful Chāṇḍī. Of these Manasā also has to her credit a fourth verse-series known as *Manasāmangal*. Viṣṇu-Kṛiṣṇa also received a new form and meaning ; Kṛiṣṇa, the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, became but a distant memory, and he became either the dalliant lover of his comrade and consort Rādhā and conceived as the eternal and ideal lover, or the average pet child nourishing himself on stolen butter from the household corner, of the average fondling of a mother. At least these are the two main aspects in which our poets and artists loved to see him depicted. The metaphysical interpreta-

tions that came later to invest this homely and loving personality with an abstraction unintelligible to the ordinary people were the doings of the later Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava writers that were mainly Pauranic in outlook and the Goswamīs of Vṛindāvana, vastly learned in the hieratic *śāstras*, the Vedānta being their *raison d'être*. This socio-religious outlook of the ordinary mass of the people must not be viewed as a qualitative change or transformation of the socio-religious outlook of the hieratic upper classes due to Islamic domination. It was indeed a different outlook altogether, co-existent with the other outlook, and we know from Pāhārpur of the eighth and ninth centuries expressions of both so far as plastic art is concerned. For centuries after Pāhārpur the socio-religious outlook of the people and its expression in art, religion and literature suffered to remain in the background, away from the patronage of the court, the commercial community and upper classes. In the villages, however, far from the gaze of the dominant socio-economic orders of the realm, their life with all its cultural expressions must have pursued its humble but uninterrupted course. The establishment of Muslim domination only indirectly helped to bring it to the fore and give a chance to the culture of the people of making itself felt. Indeed, if the evidence of the history of Bengali literature is any indication, it must be admitted that the Muslim courts of about the end of the 15th century gave patronage to this people's culture and reared it up in its formative stages, while the hieratic upper classes continued to bestow their favours, whatever they were yet capable of, within the narrow confines of sheltered community already referred to.

Of art objects we have at our disposal hardly anything mentionable that can be definitely dated in the 13th, 14th or even in the 15th century, except the monuments—tombs, mosques, minārs, assembly halls, gates and ramparts, etc—reared up by the Muslim sultans themselves or under the direct patronage of their courts, at Lakhnauti or Gauḍ, Māldaha-Pāṇḍuā, Trivenī, Saptagrām, Rājsāhi, Maṅgalkoṭ, Hugli-Pāṇḍua, Bāgerhāt, Suvarṇagrām and other places. They are representatives of contemporary Indo-Muslim architecture and it is well-known that as far as at least the mosques are concerned they were mostly built directly on and around the nuclei of earlier Hindu temples. It is unlikely that the architects of these monuments were all Muslims, though it is easy to imagine that the plans were

laid out and the entire work supervised by Muslims themselves, for they were evidently the people who knew best the socio-religious requirements of their community and of their civil and military needs. Speaking of the capital city of the kingdom of Bangala, i. e. Gaud, which was reached from Cheh-ti-gan (Chittagonj) via Sona-urh-kong (Sonargaon or Suvarṇagrām), Ma-Huan states, sometime about the year 1405, that the inhabitants of the walled city were all dark and followers of Islam, with shaven heads. The language of the kingdom was known as Bangala, though Persian was also in use. Among the professional classes Ma-Huan mentions the *silpins*, along with the physicians, astrologers and scholars. The mention of the *silpins* suggests that the artists as a class were still potent but it is unfortunate that we have very little evidence of the arts and crafts they practised besides architecture. If evidences of the practice of sculpture and painting as well as of non-Islamic architecture are meagre, not so are those of Bengali language and literature, the language (bhāshā of early Bengali texts) and literature of the ordinary people as distinct from those of the sheltered Brahmanical community, i. e. Sanskrit. The lisping Bengali tongue must have already become articulate when Islam came, but it had not yet become the recognised language of the court and the upper grades of the society; but by about the beginning of the fifteenth century it had acquired the strength and recognition to be able to draw the attention of a foreign observer like Ma-Huan, Persian being the other language presumably used at the court and by the small alien community. Ma-Huan does not mention Sanskrit at all, presumably because it had already been pushed to the background. The Brāhmaṇas, we have already seen, had taken up an attitude of non-co-operation; to recognise Sanskrit therefore was out of question so far as the alien court and community were concerned. The language was difficult and hardly accessible to the general mass of the people who went about expressing themselves in what they know as their own *bhāshā*, i. e. Bengali. At the same time the alien court and community must have gradually come to feel—and this must have been more and more insistent as the local converts from Hinduism and Buddhism grew in number—that the first step towards rearing up a successful administration in the midst of an alien people was to understand them fully and

well, their socio-religious ideas and practices, their myths and legends, their laws and codes of behaviour. It therefore became almost incumbent on them to extend patronage to the language and literature of the main bulk of the population. Pre-Muslim Bengali literary specimens, if not considerable, are yet known ; known also are a few specimens of early Bengali language and literature before the time when Muslim court patronage began to be extended to Bengali writers, for example, the *Manasā-mangal* of one-eyed Haridatta ; but there is no denying the fact that the patronage of Alauddin Hussain Shah himself and his dynasty, specially of Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah, Hussain's second son, gave the nascent language and literature a status, dignity and popularity that helped to give them a start for a glorious career. The meaning and significance of Mālādhār Basu's *Srīkrishna-vijaya* which purports to be a translation of the 10th and 11th chapters of the *Srīmad-Bhāgavata*, Vijayapaṇḍita's translation of a portion of the *Mahābhārata*, Vijayagupta's *Manasā-mangal*, translation of portions of the Great Epic by Kavindra Parameśvara, Bipradāsa's *Manasā-mangal*, conferment of the title of Guṇarāj Khān on Mālādhār Basu, all under the aegis of the dynasty of Hussain Shah, mention of either Hussain Shah and his son Nasrat Shah or their representatives as direct and indirect patrons of their works by Vidyapati, Vijayagupta, Yaśoraja Khan, Srikara Nandī, Kavindra Parameśvara, and a host of others should not be lost upon the historians of the period. Later also a number of Muhammadan rulers and governors figure as good patrons of this literature, an analysis of the subjects of which reveals unmistakably that the alien rulers were increasingly interesting themselves in the general cultural, mainly socio-religious, ideas and institutions of the people. There are also enough descriptions in these books to suggest that even in their courts the Muslim rulers loved to hear these compositions in verse being sung or recited, including the Radha-Krishṇa love songs of Vidyāpati. It is also significant that the majority of these early specimens of different composition and translation series hail from Eastern Bengal in its larger and original connotation, away from the centre of Brahmanical orthodoxy that was Rādhā i. e. Western Bengal. There is nothing to be surprised at the fact that the Brahmaṇas did not feel happy about this translation and adaptation into *bhāṣā* (i. e. Bengali) of their Sanskrit originals nor about the recording down of popular lores like *Manasā-mangala* and

Chandī-mangala in the people's own language. Translators and adapters like Kīrtibas, Kaśīram Das and Bamun Ghenshe were considered by them as dangerous and they prescribed hell as the place for those who listened to recitations in Bengali (i. e. in *bhāshā*) of the eighteen Puraṇas and the story of Ramachandra. Even as late as the sixteenth century, Vṛindavanadasa, the author of the *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*, used very strong words about Bengali popular verse series like the *Manasā-mangala* and the *Chandī-mangala*. Chaitanyadeva himself flourished during the rule of Sultan Alauddin Hussain Shah who does not seem to have been slow to understand the social significance of the great movement inaugurated by that unique personality, in spite of his being a Brahmaṇa. Towards the Brahmaṇas and their religious rites and rituals, especially of Navadvīpa, the Muslims felt bitter ; there is at least one piece of evidence of the Musalmans of a certain village called Pirulya exhibiting their terrible wrath on the Brahmaṇas of Navadvīpa. But look at the comparative attitude of the then ruler of Gauḍ, Alauddin Hussain Shah *vis-a-vis* that of the Musalmans in general of Navadvīpa. If the evidence of the *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita* of Kṛishṇadaś is to be believed, the Navadvīpa Musalmans got angry at the *Kīrtana-yātrās* of Śrī-Chaitanya and petitioned the Qazī of the place to put a stop to these musical processions. Hussain Shah chose to behave otherwise. After initiation, Chaitanyadeva on his way to Vṛindavana went to the city of Ramakeli from village Kulia, both in Gauḍ ; on the eve of his arrival, Hussain Shah inquired of his adviser Keśavakhan details about Śrī Chaitanya and his visit ; and evidently feeling satisfied issued an order to the effect that Chaitanyadeva be given full freedom to move about with his musical procession and to preach his doctrines. Moreover, the Qazis and Kotwals were all threatened with life in case they chose to interfere with his activities. This is at least the story presented to us by Vṛindavanadasa in *Chaitanya Bhāgavata*. The story is not without its significance in so far as it shows the general attitude of the court of some of the Islamic dynasties, especially that of Hussain Shah, towards the culture of the people as distinguished from that of the Brahmaṇas and upper grades of the society.

(To be continued)

IF THE HEART

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

If the heart was not meant to love,
Then why hast thou filled the morning sky
with such melodies ?
Why this garland of the stars ?
Why this bridal bed of flowers ?
Why does the southern breeze whisper secrets
from ear to ear ?

If the heart was not meant to love,
Then why does the sky gaze into our eyes
with such longing ?
And why is my heart so crazy
From moment to moment—
Launching its bark on the ocean
Whose shore is not in sight ?

Translated from the original Bengali song (*Yadi prem nā dile prāṇe*) by K. K.





WOOD-CUT By Benodebehari Mukherji

TAGORE'S ANALYSIS OF HINDU-MOSLEM RELATIONS

By SACHIN SEN, Ph.D.

"PEACE is true and not conflict, Love is true and not hatred ; and Truth is the One, not the disjointed multitude" ¹—this sums up the contents of Rabindranath Tagore's religion, his approach to life and to life's problems. No one was more anxious to proclaim that there was need for happy understanding between man and man and that there was need for unity based on this happy understanding. Ancient India prayed for real unity, not a parody of unity manufactured in the political or social machine. That prayer must be uttered today not in a full-throated voice but in thought and action ; that prayer for unity should cleanse our minds, remove all weaknesses that stand in the way. It is the basic postulate of Tagore's philosophy that if there is a deviation from the right conduct of life in man's work for his own self or for the family or for the country, God will not forgive him. We shall have to atone for all the misdeeds even if they are resorted to to achieve a noble end. The doctrine of the end justifying the means makes no appeal to Tagore. There is no short-cut to noble work. That was why Rabindranath Tagore treated the Hindu-Moslem problem as essentially one to be solved mainly by our own efforts and principally through mutual understanding. The problem, in his view, touches on the weaknesses of our psychological make-up and social organisation. He asked his countrymen, principally his Hindu brothers, to remove the causes ; he laid no blame at the door of Moslems ; he accepted it as a historical fact that the foreign ruling Power would add to the difficulties of the situation.

TAGORE'S IDEALS

The ugliness of communal conflict in India becomes apparent when it is remembered that India in olden days put all her emphasis on the harmony that existed between the individual and the universal. Man's harmony with all is established when he realises kinship with the world. "The real misery of man is in the fact that he has not fully come out, that he is self-obsured, lost in the midst of his own

1. *Creative Unity*, p. 15.

desires. He cannot feel himself beyond his personal surroundings, his greater self is blotted out, his truth is unrealised." India has fallen from her own ideal, and she has grown insensible to the fact that "the ideal of truth is not in the narrow present, not in our immediate sensations, but in the consciousness of the whole which gives us a taste of what we should have in what we do have." We behave today like detached beings, losing the universal. This is the basis of conflict with the neighbour. The comprehensive view of life, the vision of the wholeness of life is lost. We have neglected the fundamental truth that "at every step we have to take into account others than ourselves." Tagore believed that "by clinging to the thread of self which is passing through the loom of life we cannot make it serve the purpose of the cloth into which it is being woven." That was why he reminded us of the message of Indian savants : "By unrighteousness men prosper, gain what they desire, and triumph over their enemies, but at the end they are cut off at the root and suffer extinction." Tagore, therefore, urged our self to "bend its head low in love and meekness and take its stand where great and small all meet. It has to gain by its loss and rise by its surrender." This was not a mere philosophical speculation for Tagore ; he believed in it with all sincerity, and with him "sin is not one mere act, but it is an attitude of life which takes for granted that our goal is finite, that our self is the ultimate truth, and that we are not all essentially one but exist each for his own separate individual existence." This sinful attitude of life is responsible for the disgraceful Hindu-Moslem conflict in India. Tagore's philosophy of life can best be studied from his Bengali discourses published under the title, "Santiniketan", some of the discourses, rendered into English, being published in "Sādhanā" (The Realisation of Life).

INDIAN ATTITUDE

From the beginning of her history India has tried to live peacefully and to think deeply. "She has tried to make an adjustment of races, to acknowledge the real differences between them where these exist, and yet seek for some basis of unity."¹ India recognised all

1. *Nationalism*.

differences, India has all along tried to establish unity in diversity, to synthesise the different sects into co-operative efforts and to realise the "One" in "Many." The differences that existed outside were tolerated ; they were not destroyed, but the inherent unity was maintained. This attitude of realising the One in "Many" naturally made her indifferent to political statecraft. This was bound to be, as the sense of conflict generally goaded the State into action.¹ But in trying to avoid collisions India made the fatal mistake of abandoning the mutability of life by setting up boundaries of immovable walls.² It was "the negative benefit of peace and order but not the positive opportunity of expansion and movement." Naturally, life departed from her social system, and in its place she is "worshipping with all ceremony the magnificent cage of countless compartments that she has manufactured." It was a tragedy in history that India "treated life in all truth where it is manifold, but insulted it where it is ever moving." This lack of movement, encouraged to strengthen peaceful life, led to stagnation of the worst kind. Tagore was pained to find that "by squeezing human beings in the grip of an inelastic system and forcibly holding them fixed we have ignored the laws of life and death."³

It is true that there was a time when India was the meeting ground of various races. The Greek, the Persian, the Saka came out to India and mingled freely with the Indian races. It did not breed conflict ; rather a new India was created out of the mould into which different potters poured out their clay. The Indian civilisation thus became rich with variegated colours. But Tagore asked us to remember that all these virile and creative efforts had taken place before the Hindu age. The Hindu age was really one of reaction—at that age the edifice of Brahmanism was based on a strong foundation.⁴ It was made impenetrable by the building up of impassable walls of customs and traditions. It was perhaps forgotten that a living thing would become lifeless if it was choked up in all directions.

1. Tagore's article on "Bhārat Barsher Itihāsh" (The History of India), *Rabindra-Rachanāvalī*, Vol. 4.

2. *Nationalism*.

3. *Creative Unity*.

4. Translated from a letter written to Dr. Kalidas Nag in 1929 B. S. (1922). Published in *Kālāntar* (The Changing Age).

Many inquiring students of Indian history are amazed by the fact that the Aryan mind which was mobile and virile and was enlivened with the vision of wholeness of life sank down to listlessness and inactivity, concerned more with small details of life. Tagore sought to give a historical explanation of the overpowering tragedy by stating that India forced living souls into a permanent passivity, "making them incapable of moulding circumstance to their own intrinsic design, and of mastering their own destiny." At a certain time after the Buddhist period in the history of India, Hindu society established a code of prohibitions and restrictions to preserve the distinctive characteristics of Hinduism and to rescue it from the influence of foreign influence and contact.¹ These restrictions did not only taint merely Hindu-Moslem relations later on ; they affected one and all even in the Hindu clan. The spirit of exclusiveness that was generated was the real problem, and the remedy lay in the change of heart, in the alteration of the basic traditions of the Hindu age.² The handicaps that are within, the shackles that retard free intercourse amongst men, the bondage that takes away the freedom from fear—these basic defects are to be changed by education, by training, and by self-control and discipline. Hindu-Moslem unity can be effectively brought about in a new age. Our mediaevalism still exists, it shall have to go. There is no other alternative ; we are to await the period of renaissance which will take us into the modern age, free from reactionary forces dwarfing the development of the Indian State and Society.

BASES OF DIFFERENCES

There are two religions, Christianity and Mohammedanism, which seek to obstruct the observances of other religious communities. The passport to union with them is to embrace their religion. There is one distinctive virtue of Christianity, that is this. It is the torch-bearer of the modern age ; the Christian mind is not covered with the morass of mediaevalism, it is not hide-bound in the religious system. That is why the Christian people have not obstructed association with others. Moreover, the European and the Christian

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

are not synonymous terms ; they are known by their nationality and not by the religious label. With Moslems it is different ; they are essentially Moslems first. It may be noted, in this context, that the nationalist theory of the State which does not find support in the Quoran is accepted by the modern Moslem States. Turkey has definitely discarded religion from the arena of politics. Indian Moslems, however, are definitely under the influence of the Islamic creed that the civil and the religious authority are intertwined. Muhammad was not only the teacher of a creed, but the founder of a State, and accordingly Moslem theocracy was enunciated in the Quoran. The Moslem State enjoined a religious obligation in which the bond of citizenship was the acceptance of Islamic faith ; Moslem theology teaches the doctrine of religious war against infidels ; Moslem jurisprudence declares that the civil and religious law of Islam and the civil and religious status of Moslems are inseparably mixed up. In the circumstances, Hindu India was confronted with a serious problem. But by the time Moslems entered India, Hindu India had practically lost the comprehensive view of life. Thus the meeting was under the influence of bad stars. Moreover, Hindus are distinct from Moslems, because Hinduism carries on non-violent non-co-operation with all other religions. But Hinduism was a mobile force when it tried to accommodate all without ruining the distinguishing characteristics of others. The difficulty was that Hinduism very soon canalised its social activities into barren and immobile directions with the result that the Hindu at present deems his religion indissolubly connected with birth and customs. A Moslem can mix freely and on an equal plane with all others in the Islamic fold ; the Hindu is obstructed in the freedom of his movement even amongst the members of his community. A Moslem does not discard others, belonging to the different religious communities, in dealings and at dinners, but the Hindu is much too careful there. Social customs and traditions are the best agencies to bridge the gulf between man and man ; one can meet in unison with the other in social ceremonies and festivities. But the Hindu feels thwarted at every step, as he is not free to mix cordially with all in social observances and festivities ; he has a number of social restrictions to respect. The Hindu and the Moslem have met in Indian soil. In the case of Hindus the obstacles to union originate not from religion but from social customs ; with

Moslems the real handicap arises from religion and not from social observances.

It is unfortunate that we have formed our society in a manner that keeps our Moslem brethren at a considerable distance. We have scorned them, we have inflicted injustice on them, and retribution has come to us in the form of injury by those whom we injured. The contribution of Moslems towards India's well-being is not negligible, but we have remained ungrateful. Tagore said :—"The Muhammadan has come to India from outside, laden with his own stores of knowledge and feeling and his wonderful religious democracy, bringing freshet after freshet to swell the current. In our music, our architecture, our picture art, our literature, the Muhammadans have made their permanent and precious contributions. Those who have studied the lives and writings of our mediaeval saints and all the great religious movements that sprang up in the time of Moslem rule, know how deep is our debt to this foreign current that has so intimately mingled with our life."

Thus our gratitude to the Moslems should be considerable.¹ India's culture is now the product of Hindu culture and Moslem culture, intermingled in one current which is overflowing our national life. In the analysis of Hindu Moslem relations Tagore's emphasis on the difference between religion and the religious system is to be taken note of. According to him, the one is fire and the other

1. Historians point out that the gifts of the Moslem age to India are visible in different directions :—

- (1) Restoration of touch with the outer world which included the revival of our Indian navy and sea-borne trade both of which had been lost since the decline of Cholas.
- (2) Internal peace over a large part of India, especially north of the Vindhyas.
- (3) Uniformity secured by the imposition of the same type of administration.
- (4) Uniformity of social manners and dress among the upper classes, irrespective of creed.
- (5) Indo-Saracen art in which the mediaeval Hindu and Chinese schools were blended together. Also new style of architecture and the promotion of industries of a refined kind (e. g. shawl, inlaying, kinkhab, muslin, carpet, etc.).
- (6) A common "lingua franca" called Hindustani and an official prose style.
- (7) Rise of our vernacular literature, as the fruit of peace and economic prosperity under the Empire of Delhi.
- (8) Monotheistic religious revival and Sufism.
- (9) Historical literature.
- (10) Improvements in the art of war and civilisation in general.

Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar.

ash. "Religion prescribes : if you do not respect man, evil unto both of them who insults and who is insulted. But the religious system states : if you do not respect the detailed observances of-mercilessly insulting man, you are guilty of apostacy. Religion says : he who unfairly treats a person damages his own inner self. But the religious system states : whatever be the sufferings, if parents permit their widowed daughters to drink water on certain specified dates, they help sinning. Religion says : vices within and without are cleansed by repentance and welfare efforts. But the religious system states : if you bathe in a particular river on the day of solar or lunar eclipse, your sins and the sins of your forefathers will be washed away. Religion says : your mind will expand if you cross the seas and study the countries outside. The religious system states : if you cross the seas you are to make penance for it. Religion says : he who is genuine deserves respect, whether he belongs to our own country or not ; the religious system states : the Brahmin, however unworthy he may be, is to be respected. In short, religion unfolds the key to salvation whereas the religious system invites the bondage of slavery."¹ It is to be noted, in this context, what the Sanskrit word "dharma", which is usually translated into English as religion, signifies. To quote the Poet, "dharma is the innermost nature, the essence, the implicit truth, of all things. Dharma is the ultimate purpose that is working in our self. When any wrong is done we say that dharma is violated, meaning that the lie has been given to our true nature."²

The religious system is overpowering the Hindus to a degree. Besides, the difference between Hindu and Moslem is not merely religious, the social structure is also different. There is unity in Moslem society as the religious teachings pervade it ; there is inequality in Hindu society through the influence of age-old injunctions. Moslem society is more consolidated than Hindu society. Those who are habituated to the rigid framework of sectarian creeds do not find anything wrong in inelastic society ; that is indeed tragic.

Tagore analysed the essential differences between a Hindu and a

1. Translated from an article, "Kartār Ichhāy Karma" (As the Master Pleaseth) in 1824 B. S. (1917).

2. *Sādhana*, p. 74.

Moslem.¹ A Moslem is defined by his religion. His religion does not consist merely in its spiritual essence ; a great deal of it is formal, the outcome of special historical circumstances. A Hindu is known by his speciality, i. e., social conventions. Surrounded in his personal life by prohibitions of all kinds about the most insignificant details of his daily career, an orthodox Hindu lives insulated in the confinement of his conventional solitary cell. His is a world which has one gate of entrance, the gate of birth, though the gates of departure are innumerable. But a Moslem is dominated by the externals of religion which make it difficult to establish channels of intimate relationship with neighbours belonging to a different religion. Thus we must know that Hindus and Moslems can never have any real union, until we can cast off the shackles of our non-essentials and free our mind from the grip of unmeaning tradition. But "in our greed for immediate political result, we are apt to ascribe the fact of our tendency towards separation to accidental circumstances, refusing to see that a code of behaviour which has not the sanction of reason and yet has the support of religion, must result in the creation of irreconcilable divisions between men. In reason alone, can we have our common meeting ground."

Tagore did not believe in the efficacy of the doctrine that Hindu-Moslem differences were to be composed merely for the sake of political statecraft. "To me the mere political necessity is unimportant ; it is for the sake of our humanity, for the full growth of our soul, that we turn our mind towards the ideal of the spiritual unity of men." So Tagore laid special stress on the strength of Hindu-Moslem friendship and observed :

1. Here is the statement of a true and eminent Mussalman scholar :—

"India is our own mother-country which gave us birth. We have made our homes here, married here, begotten children here, and here on this soil of India we have buried our sacred dead. India therefore must needs be dearer to us than any other country upon earth. We should love this very soil of India which is mingled with the dust of our ancestors. For a thousand years our own religion of Islam has been intimately bound up with India ; and in India, Islam has won some of the greatest triumphs for its now peculiar form of civilisation. We should love, therefore, the history and government of India which have been shaped by such great monarchs as Akbar the Great and his successors. I cannot bear to hear Indian Mussalmans speaking without reverence and affection for India. By all means, let us love our Mussalman brethren in other countries, but let us not have anything to do with the encouragement of those who tell us that we, Mussalmans, must always be looking outside India for our religious hopes and their fulfilment."

"Let us announce to the world that the light of the morning has come, not for entrenching ourselves behind barriers but for meeting in mutual understanding and trust on the common field of co-operation ; never for nourishing a spirit of rejection but for that glad acceptance which constantly carries in itself the giving out of the best that we have."

The vision of India at peace, growing in fullness of heart but not crippled by any differences, was the contribution of Rabindranath.¹ A nation infected by internal dissensions is like a building whose mortar has been changed to sand. It stands precariously ; so we are to keep ourselves straight and erect first. In our weakness lies the strength of the British. Tagore did not seem to believe in the theory that we should be in a position to heal our differences, if we would get self-rule first. He believed that self-rule would never be a gift, and as such we could never wrest an inch of right, unless we would compose our differences. The virtues which are necessary in a fight with the alien ruler can never be cultivated if we allow our differences to grow in volume. Attainment of freedom is not a child's play—so it can never be had by mere patchwork. In a period of epidemic, there is no good discussing the abstract principles of sanitation. Rabindranath did not support the idea of shirking the problem. He asked us to face it boldly and straightly, and we sensitive people are always shy at straight talks. Our politicians have been trained in the game of bluff, as a result of which the most important problem remains unsolved. The Poet has incurred the wrath of those politicians who are ready to welcome everything except truth, because they trade on lies. Rabindranath told nothing but truth, when he discussed the "Way to Unity" :—

"The true way to maintain a harmonious unity is by according due respect to the true distinctness of the different parts. The artificial consolidation of the mangled in spirit, the crippled in life, the dependent and the hard-pressed can only remain a jumble of incongruent parts. At the period of the swadeshi movement in Bengal, we experienced a desire to make the Moslems one with ourselves but we

1. Mr. Wells says : "Do not let differences of accent and idiom annoy you. Many great movements have been crippled, many great opportunities lost by the minor spite of the elect. Vindictive self-assertion is an invariable characteristic of the hopelessly damned. Watch yourself for the minutest first speck of this leprosy."

did not succeed in doing so. Doubtless a coalition with them would have been very convenient for it to be feasible. If there are differences between Hindu and Moslem which are real, they cannot be spirited away by jugglery. If in our anxiety to secure some convenience, we ignore the facts, the facts will ignore our convenience. We failed because the invitation which we extended to the Moslem was for serving a purpose, not because it was inevitable, as is the invitation of mutual good feeling in common service Peace between the two sections of the population can only be had either through apathy and forgetfulness or through fear of foreign rule and common hatred against it. They may form an alliance for some such immediate object of mutual self-interest but these alliances like political alliances between countries are not only transitory but in constant danger of ending in violent reaction."

(To be continued)

REVIEWS

LONGMANS MISCELLANY: Number One, 1943 ; Number Two, 1944.

Price, Rs. 5/- each. Longmans Green & Co. Ltd.

THE name of Longmans generally—though unfairly—evokes a dismal association in the minds of Indian readers. It recalls school text books, hard wooden benches and the severe eye of the master. Mr. Blagden, the enterprising Manager of the house in Calcutta, deserves credit for having corrected this unfortunate impression by the publication of these two excellent Miscellanies. Here is something that will entertain and stimulate the adult mind. Each is a "collection of poetry, short stories, articles and pictures by living authors and artists." The writers hail from various nationalities. Englishmen and Americans rub shoulders with Chinese and Indians. Everything seems superior,—yet something real is lacking. A visitor from Mars if he saw the company assembled in these pages would exclaim, "Ah, here the East and the West have become one. The twain have met." Reading through these Miscellanies one is charmed that the Indian and the foreigner, the slave and the master, think and feel alike.

The general literary standard as well as the intellectual content of the essays, sketches, poems and stories, is high. Not all of them are of equal merit—which is but inevitable in a Miscellany. Sayeed Ayub's learned essay on Tendencies in Modern Bengali Poetry (Number One), and Richard Dobson's delightful sketch of Changsha (Number Two) deserve particular mention. Lovers of short stories will find several good ones. The Miscellanies are eminently readable and tastefully got-up. The paper, printing and the binding are excellent and have set a standard for other publishers in India. The design for the dust jacket by Jamini Roy adds to the attraction. We congratulate Longmans on their achievement and look forward to more Numbers. We hope that in their future volumes the publishers will draw upon a larger and more representative circle of Indian writers than they have been able to do so far. A handful of sophisticated "intellectuals," obsessed with Eliot and Marx—strange bed-fellows—represent neither the spirit nor the thought of India. Nor do the English contributors reflect the great moral issues that are today agitating the best minds in their countries. But these limitations in no way detract from the general high standard maintained in these two consecutive publications.

K. K.

LECTURES ON PATANJALI'S MAHĀBHĀṢYA, Vol. I.

By Vidyāratna P. S. Subrahmanya Sastri, 'M. A., Ph. D. Professor of Sanskrit, Annamalai University, 1944.

THE book under review is the mellowed fruit of laborious research and scholarly analysis by a Professor who has had evidently the advantage of drawing upon the accumulated research-work of scholars, Eastern as well as Western. In

achieving his end the author has furnished in the book unmistakable evidences of his independent critical understanding, avoiding alike undue submissiveness to the verdict of accredited Western authorities and unhealthy conservatism in sticking to the good old indigenous tradition. In the face of conflicting interpretations, our author has maintained his own ground in and through his incisive analysis and exposition.

The present volume has had its value heightened by the inclusion of a "Foreword" from no less an authority in this line than Mahamahopādhyāya Sri S. Kuppaswami Sāstriar, whose sponsoring of it is a sufficient testimony to its intrinsic worth. No attempt can and need be made here to justify the merit of the publication, with specific reference to the detailed execution of the task the author has set to himself. We are, however, in full agreement with the writer of the "Foreword" in holding that "the exposition is critical and accurate as far as it goes and is lucid, easy, and quite in conformity with traditional commentaries." It is needless to advertise here the focal importance of Patanjali's Mahābhāṣya in the realm of Sanskritic studies. Suffice it to quote in justification the famous saying in this regard—"mahābhāṣyam vā pāthanīyam mahārājyam vā pālanīyam" that is to say, in the instructive language of the "Foreword"—"If a *privilege-calculus* similar to the *Ananda-calculus* of the *Tāittirīyopaniṣad* should be worked out by *Vāiyākaraṇa* traditionists, they would give a scheme in which the opportunity to study and teach the Mahābhāṣya is on a par with supreme sovereignty in a political sense."

S. K. DAS.

OUR STERLING BALANCES: By Prof. M. V. Bhatawdekar. Published by Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay, pp. 47. Price Rs. 1/-.

OF the many changes which have been brought about by the World War No. II in the economic life of India, the accumulation of Sterling in London to India's credit is most significant. Any literature on such an important subject is both timely and useful.

In this little book the author traces the origin and the nature of the sterling balances and discusses the possibilities of total or partial repudiation. The author believes that the "possibilities of repudiation are not many," (pp. 23) but concludes later on by saying: "Let us hope that Britain will honour the pledge and shall not attempt repudiation" (pp 37). Frankly speaking, such lines expressing different meanings seem to be quite contradictory. If the possibilities of repudiation are really 'not many', then the hope of Britain's honouring the pledge is at best a superfluous hope and carries no significance. On the other hand, if India is only to depend on the hope of Britain's not falling back from her financial commitments, then it would have been better frankly to admit that the possibilities of repudiation exist at least in theory, if not in practice. Events in the Bretton Woods Conference should have served as a new pointer, and it is

strange that in a book published as late as November 1944 there is no reference whatsoever to this very important event.

Nevertheless, the book has a freshness which should appeal to its readers. There will be a general agreement over the proposal for devaluation of the rupee. The suggestion for maintaining the rupee-sterling link is however of doubtful value, and the consensus of opinion may be on the side of Prof. Vakil and Prof. Anjaria who have put forward the suggestion that the "rupee should be de-linked from the sterling for the time being at any rate."

A reference to the position of Britain's oversea investment would have proved more useful. If Britain parts with a part of her oversea investment to liquidate her sterling obligation to India, then the problem of sterling balances would have been solved once for all.

K. N. Bhattacharya.

A GLIMPSE INTO GANDHIJI'S SOUL : Six Wood-Cuts by Dhiren Gandhi. Price : Rs. 3/8/- International Book House Ltd., Bombay.

THE artist was a student of Kala-Bhavana, Santiniketan, for about four years. He left in August 1942, soon after Gandhiji's arrest. Since then he has been pursuing his vocation with admirable zeal. Being a relative of Gandhiji, he was allowed access to the Aga Khan's Palace during the historic fast. These wood-cuts are a record of his impressions and are an attempt to portray the spiritual significance of the ordeal which Gandhiji had imposed on himself.

This neatly got-up publication needs no publicity of a review to help its sale. The interest of the subject-matter and its title will ensure it. As works of art, the wood-cuts cannot be classed very high. The sentiment has obviously got the better of the artist's instinct. However, considering the age and comparative inexperience of the artist and the emotional stress natural under the circumstances, the effort is creditable. We shall look forward to more maturity, insight and restraint in the next effort of this young and promising artist. The Publishers have done their job well. The printing, paper and the get-up are excellent.

K. K.

MRIDANGA-TABLA-VADANA SUBODH : Part III : By Govindrao Devrao Guruji : Published by the Author : Mahajanapeth, Burhanpur, (C. P.) ; 1944 : Rs. 6/- . pp. 476.

THE book under review is an invaluable addition to the particular branch of Indian music it treats, written by one who is acclaimed on all hands as an authority on the subject. It is not often that a reviewer chances upon a treatise on classical music, especially on the most "mathematical" aspect of it, the

rhythm, addressing itself equally to the novice, the technician and the connoisseur. A vast number of *paranas* and *relas* are all directly original, bearing on them the distinctive stamp of a master mind. The system of notations, the *bols*, are refreshingly lucid. The earlier part of the book deals with the 'theory' of this exceedingly practical art and serves as a useful introduction. The book is full of ample materials to drill the beginner, infuse self-confidence in the amateur and embolden the professional. The reader would not hesitate to draw with profit upon this work which is doubtless a unique one amidst the amorphous chaos claiming to be called critical musical literature of the country.

V. Wazalwar.

HINDUISM AT A GLANCE : By Swami Nirvedananda of the
Ramakrishna Order. Model Publishing House, 2 A
Shamacharan De St., Calcutta ; Price Rs. 5/8

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN, who contributes the foreword, shares the author's conviction that "the essential principles of Hinduism have nothing to fear from any advance in scientific knowledge or historic criticism." The author, himself learned in scientific lore, has indeed convincingly set forth the essential contents of Hinduism in this handy volume of 230 pages. The book, though written by a scholar, is not primarily meant for scholars—though they would undoubtedly derive pleasure in going through its pages and appreciate the masterly way in which the subject has been handled—but for the man of average intelligence and enquiring mind who wants to know about things that go to constitute the Hindu way of life. The presentation is authoritative and the author's command over English has helped him to present his thesis in a wonderfully lucid style.

The book is divided into two parts—the first comprising the main contents of Hinduism including the four-fold path of yoga—an admirable exposition by itself—and the second, a comprehensive view of Hinduism comprising what may be called its distinctive features—its scriptures and prophets, its cosmogony, theology, rituals, mythology, etc., and is wound up with a chapter on the Hindu outlook on life in which the author has dealt with the entire range of Hindu culture not ignoring its historic setting and indicating at the same time the part assigned for it in the shaping of the coming civilization. Hindus and non-Hindus alike will be grateful to the author for a timely publication of this kind. It will be particularly helpful to foreigners in understanding the true significance of an age-old culture and incidentally in protecting themselves from mischievous propaganda against Hinduism by interested parties which have been so much in evidence of late. The copious glossary and the index at the end add to the value of the book. The volume is neatly got up.

K. G.

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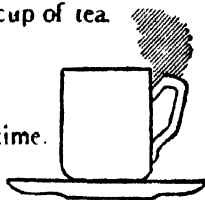
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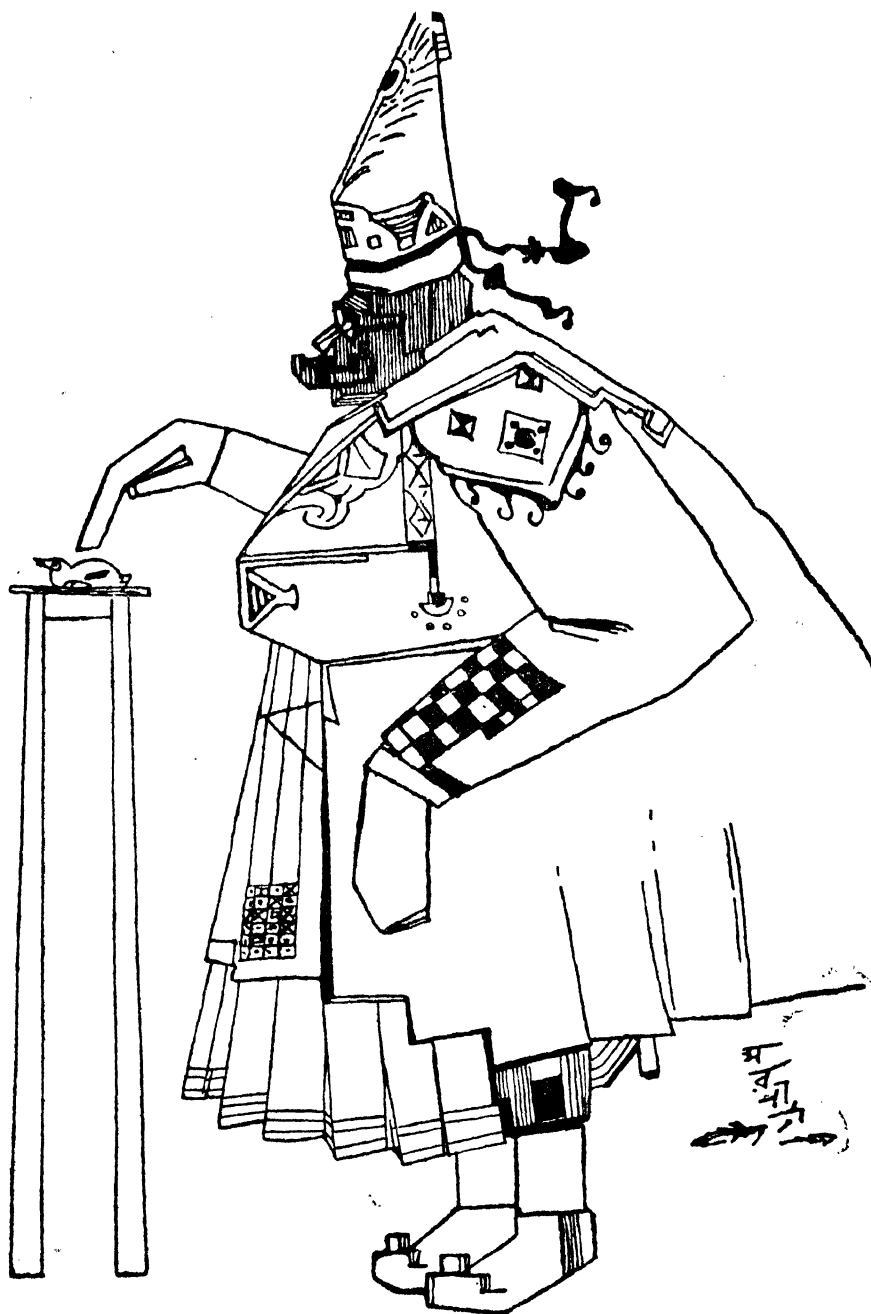
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POST-WAR BUSINESS UNDERTAKING

Indian industry in all its branches must have every opportunity of expanding after the War. In fact, the process of industrialisation has already started and before long it is expected to make vital contribution towards the nation's economic well-being.

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TAGORE'S ANALYSIS OF HINDU-MOSLEM RELATIONS

By SACHIN SEN, Ph. D.

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

THE BRITISH GAME

MANY Hindus believe that the British Government do not aim at the resolving of the Hindu-Moslem conflict. They cannot possibly welcome the collaboration of Hindus and Moslems under the banner of a common organisation. So it is in their interests that they will keep alive the flame of religious animosity and humble the Hindus through the instrumentality of Moslems. It is a conviction held by many that Hindus are dealt with strongly when communal frenzy breaks out and that Moslems are humoured and cajoled. The spread of such belief is not helpful for communal concord. Often it is found that Government create discord by curbing the legitimate rights of Hindus on the plea of apprehended communal riot ; this serves as an encouragement to Moslems. It may be contended that the governmental policy of partiality for Moslem is born of the desire to avoid inflaming Moslems who are united, organised and powerful. It helps matters when in Hindu-Moslem feud, the timid, disorganised Hindu community is punished to the exclusion of Moslems. The real reason is that the British do not like to see Hindus united and organised, and accordingly they encourage Moslems to undermine the political organisation of Hindus. Tagore, however, thought that the repression of Hindus by Government would bring Hindus together, rather than do any harm. "Those who have been defeated again and again but have never learnt to come together, those who harbour the poison of disunity in their social organism, how can they be bound together ? That the British are indifferent to the pangs of our heart, that the English strike us and multiply the creation of wounds is imperceptibly bringing the Hindus together."¹ Tagore found that the British, guilty as they were, could not be relied on in the matter of solution of communal harmony. The urge must come from within ; the

¹ Translated from an article on "Subichārer Adhikār" (The Right to Justice) written in 1801 B. S. (1894).

blind and lazy habit of relying upon the authority of traditions that are incongruous anachronisms must be shaken off ; the social customs and ideals which have generated a want of self-respect and a complete dependence on those above us must be removed. "It was my conviction that what India most needed was constructive work coming from within herself. In this work we must take all risks and go on doing the duties which by right are ours, though in the teeth of persecution, winning moral victory at every step, by failure and suffering."¹ The real constructive work is to make ourselves strong, to evolve social unity within and to achieve the harmony of reconciliation with fellow beings living in the same land.

As President of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Pabna, Tagore made the following significant observations in 1314 B.S. (1907).

"The sword of disunity is hanging over the country. Years have rolled by when the Hindu and the Moslem have enjoyed the same affection sitting on the thighs of the common motherland, still to-day there are obstacles to their happy union. As long as the causes of this weakness subsist so long there is hardly any chance of effectuating in full any of the noble hopes of the country ; the discharge of our political duties will be difficult at every step. We should not lose heart if this disunity between Hindus and Moslems is turned into a conflict by a third Power—we shall certainly be able to overcome the created disorder if we can banish the evil of disunity from our midst. This conflict is bound to die in course of time. Government would hardly be equal to fanning the flame for all time to come. If they encourage this conflagration, time will soon come when they shall have to call fire-brigade to quell it in their own interests. If the houses of subjects are set in flame, some time or other through uncertain directions the fire is likely to spread upto the premises of the King's palace." (Translated).

Tagore advised us not to lament, not to weaken ourselves by bemoaning before others, not to feel despondent by dashing our heads against bolted doors. In his view, there is no cause of despair if we return to our own men, our own kith and kin, and resist all attempts at separating one community from the other. In the past we were inert, we could remain united ; our aim should be to remain knit together in the full blaze of action. We apprehend that our ruling

1 *Nationalism.*

race can sow dissensions amongst us ; it merely emphasises that there are good grounds of such apprehension. Those grounds shall have to be removed ; unity is to be strengthened. All this can be done by us and us alone. If we look to others, we shall be disappointed. So Tagore said : "We shall remain firm where we have our own strength ; we shall remain alive to our duty ; we shall place reliance on those who are our own people. We shall not despair, nor shall we complain against the conduct of Government We want no favours ; governmental hostility will increase our prowess. Do not lull us to sleep ; pleasures are not meant for us ; do not let the dose of opium of slavery increase day by day ; in your sombre rule lies our deliverance. There is but one way to instil vigour into the lifeless—strife, insult and want, and not cordiality, not helpfulness and not contentment."¹

It is an elementary truth, which should not be ignored, that the British will not spare us if we seek to harm them. Hence, when we agitate to wrest powers or to undermine the foundations of British rule, we must be prepared for hard knocks from them. But often, very often, we forget this truth. In the height of our anti-British agitation we expected humane treatment from the British. Such fond expectation did not show our wisdom. When we seek to seize power from British hands, should not the British in their turn try to fan communal hatred to cloud the issues and to block the way to the transfer of power from British to Indian hands ? There is a general complaint that the British are secretly setting up Moslems against Hindus to stabilise their rule. Should we remain unprepared for this ? Why should we presuppose that the British will not exploit weaknesses in our society to their advantage ?

The fact that Moslems can be set up against Hindus is much more painful than the British policy of divide and rule. When sins are there and relations are strained, it is only natural that our enemy should take advantage of such unhappy situation. It calls for careful attention to our weaknesses and not to the enemy who prospers on our divisions. There is something vitally wrong in Hindu-Moslem relations in our country ; it is continuing for a very long time. There is no other alternative but to suffer the penalty for this long-subsisting

1 Translated from an article on "Banga-bibhāg" (the Partition of Bengal) written in 1811 B. S. (1904).

sin, although we often remain indifferent to it, occasionally broken by outbursts of communal frenzy. "It is to be admitted that there is a conflict amongst Hindus and Moslems. We are not only different ; we are hostile to each other. For ages we have lived together taking fruits from the same orchard, drinking water from the same river, enjoying the same sun, speaking the same language, suffering the same distress—still we could not formulate a code of neighbourly conduct, the code which is sanctioned by the canons of right conduct. We have been harbouring for long a sin to the effect that we could not help remaining aloof in spite of our living together."¹ In many places, Hindus and Moslems do not occupy the same seat ; Hindus consider water polluted by the touch of Moslems ; they hate Moslems as infidels. "The country where religion (or the sastric injunction) prescribes the hatred of man, where people are doomed to perdition for the drinking of water from the hands of a neighbour, where one's caste is to be preserved by showing insult unto the other, the people of that country are bound to court insults at the hands of others. They shall have to receive the scorns of infidels who are ridiculed as such. Those who are not used to consider man as man, those who are concerned in limiting the exercise of mutual rights with great subtlety ; those who know to forsake their own people at the speck of a slight fall and not to accept others ; those who have conscientious objection to make a bow of civility to the ordinary man ; those who are ever watchful to avoid association with men in various ways, they are bound to be weak on the plane of humanity. Those who have isolated themselves, those who are overpowered by a spirit of exclusiveness rather than the spirit of oneness, they have no escape from the bondage of poverty, insult and slavery."²

The British have been sitting like an octopus upon Indians, not by their inherent strength. Our sins are the sources of their strength ; British rule is merely a symptom of the disease. This Hindu-Moslem conflict is deepening because our weaknesses in society are remaining unattended to. The foreign ruler will not quit India at our mere wish or at the launching of an agitation by a

1 Translated from an article on "Byadhi O Pratikār" (Disease and Remedy) written in 1814 B. S. (1907).

2 Ibid.

disunited people ; even if he quits, the country shall have to be made our own by our own efforts. That is the price of freedom. The fact that it is all to our advantage to have Hindu-Moslem alliance is not enough for the purpose ; it shall have to be earned by the removal of all hindrances from within. We shall have to overcome our mutual exclusiveness. That basic condition is to be satisfied. But often we are impudent enough to advertise our strength where we do not possess any. The flaunting of one's strength may be becoming of those who are really powerful, but it smooths the path of bankruptcy for the impotent. Those who are isolated are really weak. It is not to be taken as an extraordinary event if the vessel which is just strong enough to carry the weight of passengers shows cracks if the passengers continue jumping on it. In that case, the leaks are to be repaired. The spring of all evils in our country is that we stand disunited, separated. Hence we should bend all our energies to the converging of the "many" into "one."¹

It is a futile attempt to build up a nation by damaging national cohesion. Tagore was one of those who believed that the method of obtaining the objective was much more important than the attainment of the objective aimed at, as we shall soon be defeated in our attempts if human conduct registers any deviation from truth, that is, religion. No great work can be done by making truce with evil forces ; that is what both of our Epics have taught us. The welfare of the country is the welfare of humanity. And that cannot be achieved by nursing the spirit of exclusiveness which is poisoning Hindu-Moslem relations. If we want to approach man we shall have to serve him, to remove the gulf that widens each other ; we shall have to make ourselves humble. It is not by the ding-dong method of enforced alliance that communal conflict can be subordinated.²

THE REAL PROBLEM

Our real problem is to consolidate the scattered parts and to build up a great nation. This should be our overriding consideration. If British rule helps us in achieving this task, it should receive adequate appreciation. If it is a fact that the British have set Moslems against Hindus, they have in fact served our cause, as no great work

¹ Translated from an article on "Desh-Hita" (Welfare of the Country) written in 1815 B. S. (1908).

² Translated from an article on "Sadupay" written in 1815 B. S. (1908).

is possible in scorn of this basic truth. The truth is that Hindus and Moslems have never met in the arena of happy understanding—the one has excluded the other in daily intercourse and social relationship. The real blame need not be laid at the door of the English. It is to be remembered that the attainment of unity for expediency or for strategic considerations is not the highest truth. India has for long fallen from the ideal of living touch with humanity. All our feelings, our welfare efforts are so much restricted that the relations between man and man do not extend over the wider field of understanding and knowing each other. “We are separated like scattered islands, we are not continuous, wide and united like one continent.” Every individual should feel the urge of holding communion with the other in all his activities. The wall that separates, the gulf that yawns, the customs that block this communion, the knowledge that retards respectful intercourse with the neighbour and the world without, the activity that mars the inter-dependence of man and man, the code that teaches exclusiveness in any sphere of life—all this is to go. Tagore keenly felt that in India our knowledge, activity, customs and intercourse with man—all stood broken up and divorced from cordial and respectful relations with neighbours. We have not respected one another, helped one another, understood one another. This scornful indifference, this communal approach, this mutual exclusiveness are definitely lowering ourselves, hampering our real work. These fundamental weaknesses can hardly go if the foreign ruler quits India ; these leakages can hardly be filled up by forging political union on strategic grounds. All this makes us weak, our knowledge defective, our society narrow. “Whoever lives in India, whoever has come to India, we shall be one by accommodating all—this will solve in India a great problem of the world. The problem is that man is different in colour, language, nature, behaviour, creed—humanity is great in this diversity ; in this temple of India we shall unify that diversity. Win the country by welfare efforts—overcome the suspicion of those who suspect you, defeat the jealousy of those who are jealous of you. Strike at the bolted door again and again, do not go away in despondence, in sheer disdain. Human heart can never refuse human heart for all time to time.”¹

¹ Translated from an article on “The Problem” written in 1915 B.S. (*Rabindra-Rachanavali*, Vol. 10).

Those who are protagonists of political unity amongst different sections and communities, obviously with a view to wresting power from the alien nation, contend that if in certain parts of Europe, particularly in Switzerland, different nationalities may live side by side in perfect amity and concord, why should not Indians, though split up into different sections and communities, be able to pull on under a common State. Tagore¹ was not evidently impressed with this kind of argument which was very popular amongst Indian nationalists. Switzerland is the home of different nationalities, but no spirit of exclusiveness poisons their mutual relations; they are one in religion, in customs and traditions; they can inter-dine and inter-marry. The best form of attachment arises from social cohesiveness; it cannot be cemented by mere words. Indians proclaim themselves as one great nation, but socio-religious injunctions stand in the way of social solidarity. They lie essentially scattered, spread out and un-co-ordinated. Even amongst Hindus there are wheels within wheels which discourage the feeling of oneness. So the one does not feel acutely for the other. We all know in our heart of hearts that our political unity suffers from national unreality. That is why we keep this unreality aside and want to broadcast our patriotic grandeur. Where the foundation is weak, it does not become stable merely on the superfluity of material. The patched-up unity during the Khilafat agitation in the twenties of the present century gave way to communal conflict later on, as the basic weaknesses were not removed. Tagore emphasised again and again that where religion had bred the spirit of exclusiveness, the door to unity was really bolted from within. Occasionally Hindus and Moslems have tried to meet to forge weapons against the ruling Power, but when the ruling Power remained aloof, the edifice of so-called unity immediately showed cracks. Even against the third Power, Hindu-Moslem unity had been achieved very clumsily. During the Bengal Partition agitation, Moslems did not identify themselves with Hindus. During the Khilafat agitation Moslems solicited the co-operation of Hindus in the matter of establishing the ascendancy of the Khalifa, and Hindus warmly grasped the hand of co-operation to make their non-co-operation movement effective against the British Power. The sources of inspiration were manifestly attuned to different keys. But when

1 The article on "Samasya" written in 1880 B.S. (1928) in "Kālāntar" (The Changing Age).

the storm passed away, Hindus and Moslems relapsed again into communal consciousness, and communal bickerings went on unabated. In fact, since the Sepoy Mutiny upto the present stage, communal concord had been a thing of the past.

It may be helpful at this stage to recite that historically Indian politics from 1858 onwards was brought directly under the aegis of Imperial diplomacy. After the Sepoy Mutiny Sir Syed Ahmed Khan appeared as the saviour of the Moslems bourgeoisie, and the movement initiated by him may be described as the Aligarh movement. The basic features of the Aligarh movement were as follows :

(1) The Aligarh movement was based on cheerful acceptance of British rule in India, and it tried to reverse the process of the Wahabi movement which was launched in the first half of the nineteenth century to re-found Moslem domination in British India.

(2) It was sustained by a spirit of competition with the Hindu in the matter of securing favour from the ruling race.

(3) The objectives of the Aligarh movement were to broaden Anglo-Moslem friendship, to reconcile oriental learning with Western literature and science and to make Moslems of India loyal subjects of the British Crown.

(4) The movement aimed at dissociating Moslems from Hindu organisations and from all kinds of anti-British agitation.

From 1858 right upto 1898 Syed Ahmed Khan was the pivot around whom Moslem politics moved, and it was this new philosophy of Moslems which heartened the ruling race to propound the theory of "counterpoise of natives against natives". It was true that Bengal Moslem masses were influenced by the doctrines of the Wahabi movement, but by and by at the instance of the Moslem bourgeoisie Moslem masses forgot all about the basic postulates of the Wahabi movement and followed the leaders in their pursuit to curry favours from the "infidel" ruling race. The whole trick was done by the authoritative declaration from Moslem High Priests that India was not Dar-al-Herb but Dar-al-Islam as the peculiar observances of Islam prevailed therein. The Jihad against the British was very soon turned into a Jihad against Hindus. It opened up a wished-for vista before the Moslem upper classes. Since then, Moslems have been moving away from Hindus, and politically this exclusiveness was sanctioned by the ruling Power through the grant of separate

electorates in 1909. Even the Khilafat movement which was a temporary reversal of the tactics of the Aligarh movement was essentially Islamic, as it encouraged the Islamic doctrine of religious war, extra-territorial patriotism and Moslem theocracy. Moslems in India have never been Indians in their approach to politics. Even to-day the Pakistan movement is nothing but a continuation of the Aligarh movement of Sir Syed Ahmed and the Pan-Islamic movement of Sir Muhammed Iqbal.

This historical background is offered to set the Hindu-Moslem conflict in its proper setting. But during the period from the battle of Plassey in 1757 to the Mutiny of 1857, Hindus for historical reasons won the race of gaining favours from the foreign Ruler. They took to English education and gained Government posts and honours. Moslems were defeated in the race as they hesitated to accept English education and British rule in India. In this wise, a sort of difference grew up accentuating communal divisions. Tagore was of the opinion that this difference would have to be obliterated in the interests of unity ; it is standing in the way. So he urged Hindus to pray cheerfully for the extension of Government favours in respect of services to Moslems. When the limit of such patronage will be reached, Moslems will find that drops of little favours are of no significance. When they will know that there is no real gain without prowess, without unity, and that it is sacrilegious to damage the unity of the common motherland, then and then only will the two brothers join hands in the meeting ground of common action.¹ Unity can only be achieved through the observance of necessary self-control, caution and patience. It undoubtedly involves sacrifices. In a modern State whose interference in the activities of citizens is increasing every day, Government service is not merely a vehicle of earning income ; it is the passport to national service. Tagore advised us not to bicker with Moslems in the matter of allotment of services on communal lines ; he preferred greater favours to Moslems so that Moslems might attain parity with Hindus which would accelerate the pace of union. Tagore may be criticised on the ground that when the State is taking upon itself all the responsibilities of social services for improving the standard of living, the throwing

1 The address of Tagore as President of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Pabna in 1814 B. S. (1908).

of State services to a particular community, especially when that community is soaked with the poison of communalism, will make the whole governmental machinery inefficient and sectarian with prejudicial repercussions on the political and economic spheres. All this will delay the day of deliverance. But Tagore tried to make it clear that suspicion was to be banished and that ultimately Moslems would have to accept the lesson of "earning rights by virtue of efficiency alone." The dawning of such good sense can be quickened in an atmosphere of trust, and that trust is to be earned.

Tagore laid emphasis on the two most essential things that India needed ; namely, education and unity. It makes one naturally anxious if education is damaged and unity marred. True education helps unity ; real unity is the highest form of training. In the absence of education and unity, Hindu-Moslem conflict is spreading. There can be no unity unless there is a change of heart ; the change of heart presupposes that the spirit of exclusiveness born of mutual hatred and distrust must go, and it can go if there is true education. In India the ways of living, the traditions of growing up within the communal cells, all this is definitely discouraging for true education and real unity.

THE PARTITION OF INDIA

In describing the evil effects of the partition of Bengal, Tagore stated as follows : "Moslems are in a majority on the eastern side of Bengal. The sense of unity is more powerful amongst Moslems than amongst Hindus for religious and social reasons—hence, the basic material of strength is ingrained among Moslems. This Moslem zone is bound up with Hindus on account of uniformity in language, literature and education. If Bengal is divided into two zones, the Moslem zone and the Hindu zone, then all the ties that bind Hindus and Moslems will be unloosened by and by. It is difficult to separate the Hindu from the Hindu by drawing a line in the map, because there is social cohesion amongst Bengali Hindus. But there is disunity amongst Hindus and Moslems. That disunity cannot be felt in all ugliness because of contiguous living ; both the parties were somehow united. But if the King proposes to widen the gulf that exists and make both the parties independent of each other, then in course of time Hindu-Moslem exclusiveness and the intensity of mutual

jealousy will be undoubtedly on the increase. In fine, in this unfortunate country it is not difficult to create disunity ; the basic problem is how to achieve unity.”¹

Thus Tagore warned his countrymen against the division of the country into Hindu zones and Moslem zones. Although his warning was uttered in 1908, it is of special significance in the context of contemporary events when the Moslem League has been agitating for the creation of sovereign States in the Moslem-dominated areas in pursuance of the resolution adopted at its Lahore session in 1940. Tagore's opposition to such independent sovereign State was based on fundamental grounds ; he could not encourage the widening of the gulf, especially when mutual hostility, jealousy and disunity existed. It is contented by many that it may be graceful to accept the objective reality and not to insist on unity from sentimental considerations. With Tagore the position was otherwise ; he could not accept disunity as the last word on Hindu-Moslem relations. His basic apprehension was that the division of the country into different distinct zones would complete the phase of disruption ; it would make the blot on human relations indelible, a disaster to Indian civilisation.

That Tagore was not wrong could be found out from the analysis of the separatist tendencies inherent in the Pakistan plan advocated by the Moslem League. The Pakistan plan ignores the lesson that a State may in course of time produce a nationality ; it is likely to help a theocratic State ; it will, in the ultimate analysis, encourage the Islamic concept that non-Moslems can live only in a state of submission and dependence ; it may be embroiled in the Islamic tradition of extra-territorial allegiance. In this wise, the creation of separate zones in the Moslem-dominated areas with a sovereign State and without any integrating link with the Hindu zone, as given out in the Pakistan plan of Mr. Jinnah, will invite complications and administer a deep cut across the fundamental concept of Indian civilisation ; harmony and co-operation between Hindus and Moslems will be jeopardised. It was Tagore's prophetic vision that he saw in the Bengal partition the seed of the creation of Hindu zones and Moslem zones, which he condemned unequivocally in the interests of lasting unity between the two communities. With him unity and

1 Translated from an article on "Sadupay" (Good Ways) written in 1815 (*Rabindra-Rachanavali*, Vol. 10).

inter-dependence are not questions of expedience ; they are fundamental to the solution of the problems of the individual, of the country and of the world.

Tagore, however, must not be misunderstood. He has always stood for the awakening of different sects, different communities. Every particular community has its own distinctive features, special characteristics which will enrich human civilisation. This consciousness of one's own genius and tradition helps one to rise to greatness ; he who is indifferent to his own distinctive culture is a mass of inert flesh. The realisation of diversity is not an antidote to real unity. Tagore was definitely of the view that one would feel the urge to become great when he was saturated with the pride of one's distinctive existence, and that real unity would come when both the parties were sufficiently awakened and enlightened.¹ It cannot conduce to effective unity when one or both of the parties are sunk in a low state of existence. "When the two partners are unequally situated, the partnership subsists so long as it is necessary for them to overcome common danger. But when that necessity expires, straightforward dealings are no longer resorted to at the time of the partition of property. Because of this suspicion Moslems have not responded to our call. It is true that if both of us remain united the net gain will be considerable, but with Moslems the vital point was if they would gain much more than Hindus. Therefore, it was not improper for Moslems to say that it was ultimately to their good if they could rise to greatness separately. Sometime ago this spirit of exclusive independence was not present amongst Hindus and Moslems. . . . At present, Moslems are struggling their way to eminence in their own way. But this is the real road to perfect union, howsoever unpleasant it may appear to-day and whatever inconvenience it may cause us. It is difficult to give in charity unless you are rich ; man can really make sacrifices when he is great and noble. Jealousy and conflict are bound to appear so long as there is want and meanness. Self-effacement on the part of a weak person is not healthy ; self-abnegation on the part of a really great man is welcome."² Tagore stood for the awakening of different races and creeds, because he believed that the ultimate realisation would come from

1 Translated from Tagore's article on "Hindu Visva-Vidyalyaya" (Hindu University) written in 1818 B. S. (1911) (*Rabindra-Rachanavali*, Vol. 18).

2 Ibid.

the establishment of relationship with others. That was why every autonomous and independent nation was anxious to hold communion with the world outside and abdicate all features harmful to such union. Hindus and Moslems can meet on the plane of unity when both the partners are equally enlightened to sacrifice the small details and unmeaning rites that blur the vision of the wholeness of life. Tagore was a robust optimist all along. But he discarded the pandering to base sentiments which stood in the way of perfect harmony and co-operation. Every movement of upheaval should be judged by the test if it is helpful to unity in the broader field ; it should be treated as a part of the general problem, the problem being the achievement of unity and inter-dependence in the sphere of national and international activities.¹

WHAT "HINDU" SIGNIFIES

According to Tagore the term "Hindu" in India has an extended connotation ; a Hindu is not to be known by the badge of sect or creed he carries. Islam denotes a particular religion, but the term Hindu signifies no particular creed. The concept of a Hindu in the history of India is co-eval with that of a nation in its social sense. Hinduism has passed through several ages ; it has crossed several stages also ; it bears the stamp of various thinkers ; its stream has flowed through the same geographical boundaries under the same sky ; it has witnessed various phases in history. A Hindu in India represents the culmination of these forces and stages ; no one in India, bound up with Indian society, shaped and influenced by Hindu thought, Hindu philosophy and Hindu traditions, can afford to be any other than a Hindu. Tagore developed his concept of a Hindu in his article on "Atma-Parichaya" (Self-Introduction) in 1319 B. S. (1912). A nation in its social

1 Ibid. Stalin in his "Problems of Leninism" urged on the same thesis when he asked the proletariat to support every national movement, everywhere and always. It meant that "the support must be given to such national movements as tend to weaken, to overthrow Imperialism and not to strengthen or preserve it." Tagore therefore pledged his support to the Moslem movement of upheaval, but he could not lend support to the division of the country into separate zones for the simple reason that it would menace unity for all time to come. The question of the rights of a community is not an isolated, self-sufficient question ; it must be considered from the point of view of the ultimate aim. Accordingly, the movement for Pakistan could not draw out support from Tagore, nor could it be supported by those who had faith in the vision of wholeness.

sense can hardly be defined. Broadly it may be stated that if persons occupy a particular area and have lived for generations under the aegis of common historical forces, they fall under the category of a common nation in spite of apparent diversities in their social and religious observances. In short, Tagore accepted the modern theory that man was the product of his environment and that he could not be free from the influences of historical forces operating in society wherein he lived, moved and had his being. The nation is higher, greater than one's creed ; creed can be changed, but not so the nation. The solidarity of the nation is not affected by the emergence of a new religious community. Judged by Tagore's definition, Indian Christians, Indian Moslems, who have lived in India for generations, who have felt the impact of social and historical forces, are all "Hindus". One can change one's religion, but how could one change his nationality ? One cannot wipe out the past ; one cannot ignore one's environment and the social forces that contributed to his make-up. One may not be proud of all this ; one may soar above, far above his compatriots. All this has nothing to affect, to prejudice his nationality. Tagore developed his contention more clearly when he stated : "A particular creed, a particular custom cannot be the permanent feature of any nation. Ordinarily all Englishmen are Christians, and their social customs are primarily based on that particular religion. But should any Englishman embrace Buddhism, he does not cease to be an Englishman. . . . From the standpoint of nationality the same past, the same history have a greater binding force. That truth which has run through ages can hardly be changed." Particular Hindus may argue that their religion is fixed ; that those who embrace any other religion cease to be Hindus. But in fact, their Hindu heredity is not changed thereby. Tagore laid greater emphasis on this aspect of heredity. There is nothing permanent in Hinduism ; it has changed ; it has brought many creeds within its fold ; it has tolerated many radical deviations. All Hindus of India do not observe the same code. Historically, if a person is a Hindu, he remains a Hindu in spite of protestations from orthodox and conservative quarters. That was why Tagore vehemently protested against the suggestion that Brahmos were not Hindus ; he pointed out that Brahmos were members of a new religious community, but they were all members of Hindu society ; they could not have left their history,

their environment, their past. "The fruits of a tree can be removed from one packet to another, but they could not grow if they are changed from one branch to a different one." Tagore therefore observed : "He who leaves his own people cannot afford to make others his own ; he who ignores his own home loses his right to invite the world to receive his hospitality. It cannot be true that a person can have a room in the large space of humanity if he casts off his own dwelling. . . . I can really save myself if I try to save the one who is mine—if I leave him aside, isolated, he will ultimately drag me down. Hence, in scorn of all hurdles, all discomforts, I am to find out my realisation, to fulfil my dream in my own environment."¹

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5. *Nationalism*.
6. *Creative Unity*.
7. *Sādhana*.

¹ Translated from Tagore's article on "Atma-Parichay" written in 1819 B. S. (1912) (*Rabindra-Rachanāvali*, Vol. 18).

THIS FATE-FORGED BOND

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

SHALT *thou* cut asunder this Fate-forged bond ?

Art thou indeed so mighty ?

Art thou so mighty ?

To break us and build, shall thy hand avail ?

Art thou indeed so haughty ?

Art thou so haughty ?

Shalt thou for ever chain us back ?

Shalt thou for ever hold us down ?

Nay, so much strength you have not !

Nay, that chain shall not hold !

Howsoever your edicts bind,

Even in the weak, is power.

Howsoever your greatness swells,

God over-rules.

When you have struck down our strength,

You too shall surely die—

Grown heavy and overladen, your boat shall sink.

[This song (*Bidhir bāndhan kātbe tumi eman śaktimān*) was originally composed in 1905 in the heat of the Anti-Partition agitation in Bengal. The Poet himself sang it through the streets of Calcutta, heading a huge procession. The Bengal Partition is an old story, but the Partition of India is a living issue. This song has gained an added significance in this context. It has been translated from the original Bengali by Miss Marjorie Sykes.—*Ed.*]



WOOD-CUT By Benodebehari Mukherji

MEDIAEVAL BENGALI CULTURE

A Socio-Historical Interpretation

By Dr. NIHARRANJAN RAY

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

THE rule of the Hussain Shah dynasty was troubled by wars with the Hindu rulers of Orissa, and later by relentless Portuguese raids that cast a dark spell over the entire zone of Lower or South Bengal, especially over the modern tracts of Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal and parts of Khulna. It saw also Humayun's occupation of Gaud and his struggle with Sher Shah. Both North and Western Bengal must have felt the impact of the struggle. Hussain Shah's dynasty was followed by the tempestuous reigns of the Kings of Sur and Karrani dynasties, most of whose time and energy were taken up by their relentless struggle with the Mughals. Even after the death of the unfortunate Daud, the last of the Karranis and the last independent ruler of Gaud (1576), Eastern Bengal under the leadership of men like Karim Dād Khan, Ibrahim Khan, Masnad-i-ālā Isā Khan, Katlu Khan Lohāni and Isā Khan Lohāni maintained their independence for another half-a-century when Akbar spread his sway over the whole of Bengal and made it into a *subah* of his all-India empire.

While political and dynastic history was being made and unmade every day on the surface of human relations, deeper down a great sociological transformation of the Bengali people was slowly but steadily taking place, mainly as the direct result of the introduction of an alien rule and culture on the one hand and the Chaitanya movement on the other. The pre-Chaitanya effects of the former have already been hinted at ; significance of the Chaitanya movement which is so often missed and the interaction of the various forces and factors brought to the fore by the impact of the great movement, remain yet to be seen and understood in their historical context.

The Chaitanya movement came at a very right moment of Indian history ; it came as if in response to a great historical demand. Almost totalitarian emphasis by the Senas on a rigid social structure based on Brahmanical ideology and the introduction of an alien rule giving rise to new social problems developed certain antitheses and contradictions in the inner social body that demanded an early synthesis. Chaitanya seems to have come on the waves of that insistent social demand, thrown out to the foreground to give articulate

expression to the deeper yearnings of the social mind and to dissolve the conflicts it suffered from.

On the socio-religious plane the different sects of the Buddhist and other heterodox communities were already at disfavour with the Sena court and contemporary upper grades of society. Tribal and other elements of the religious culture of the ordinary folk, if not directly interfered with, were at least at a discount. So were also their corresponding expressions in art and to an extent in literature as well. Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* may be taken to be the general index of Sena culture ; its language divested of its Sanskritic shell is no doubt almost Bengali, metre reducable to Bengali *payār*, and perhaps it also contains the genesis of the two aspects of later Bengali poetry — the *Mangala Kāvya* aspect and the *padāvali* or *gītikā* aspect. But the atmosphere it breathes, the over-sensitive and sensuous dalliance the poem revels in, the artificial sophistication that it portrays are all sure indications of a self-conscious court and equally self-conscious and leisured community that were the source of this kind of artificial poetry. On the purely social plane, the commercial and the mercantile classes, it has already been pointed out, were not also at favour with the court and the dominant and hieratic upper classes. Indeed, if the evidence of the *Vallāla Charita* is to be believed, the Suvarṇa-baṇiks, an influential commercial community of Western Bengal, drew upon themselves the wrath of Vallālasena as a result of which they were pushed down the social ladder, and water touched by them was declared unacceptable to the Brahmanas and other upper castes. The *Bṛihadbarmapurāna* and the *Bṛahmavaivartapurāna*, both compiled towards the 13th or 14th century and evidently somewhere in the Rāḍha country, relegates a large number of important commercial and mercantile communities as well as craftsmen and technicians outside the pale of even the *uttama-sankaras* or good mixed castes of the upper-most socio-economic orders. It was presumably also during this time that sea-voyage came to be branded as one of the major social prohibitions along with the general tightening up of the Brahmanical socio-religious code as exemplified in the *smṛiti* texts of Jimutavahana of Raghunandan. To all those who felt bitter and aggrieved in respect of this attitude of the Brahmanas and their allied grades of society, Islam and change in political authority, I have already pointed out, were hailed as a kind of release from socio-religious

tyranny and injustice. Owing to this and other causes already referred to, converts to Islam grew in number. This was a great social problem so far as the Hindu community was concerned. Secondly, Buddhist and other heterodox sects, the Nāthas, the different sects of Tāntriks, followers of mystic cults as well as of tribal totemistic and animistic cults, etc., that had gone underground or were pushed into the background, now came gradually to the fore. They were for all practical purposes outside the confines of hieratic Brahmanism. As long as there was no alien faith and alien socio-political authority to contend forces with them, Brahmanism and Brahmanical socio-religious hierarchy had nothing to be apprehensive of. But now Islam with its more direct democratic appeal and simpler tenets of faith came as a threat not only to Brahmanism but to the indigenous culture and civilisation of the country which the large mass of the people subscribed to. Thirdly, not only Brahmanism and its socio-religious ideology but also Buddhism and other mystic and esoteric cults, popular faiths and beliefs, etc., all needed a thorough overhauling through the cleansing process of a socio-religious revolution. A purer and simpler faith with a wide democratic appeal was the crying need of the times ; all exclusive caste and class consciousness expressing itself in conflicting forces and interests needed to be welded into an all-comprehensive socio-religious ideology which would embrace even the Muslims. Sociologically, the Chaitanya movement responded to all these deeper needs of the people of Bengal. Discarding rigidity of caste and its privileges, opening the doors of his Order to men and women of all classes and communities, including even the Muslims, holding up the simple ideal of love and faith in Hari on the spiritual plane and that of plain living, and doing away with rigid and elaborate religious rituals, the Chaitanya movement proved in effect to be a great social revolution. The shaven headed Buddhist monks and nuns, known in vulgar parlance as Neḍā-Neḍis, lay Buddhist communities, followers of mystic and esoteric cults, particularly commercial and mercantile communities, and all those who felt bitter and aggrieved at the treatment meted out to them by the dominant socio-economic orders of the society flocked to the banner of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in large numbers, while the ordinary village-folk mainly of the lower grades, though not actually embracing this new faith, was nevertheless swayed by it, purified by it

and found in it a new social ideal to hope for and live for and a fresher atmosphere to breathe in. Indeed, the Chaitanya movement brought a new Bengal into being, and it is only against the background of the socio-religious ideology of this new Bengal can one appreciate the real significance of the art and literature of the mediaeval period from about the beginning of the 16th to about the end of the 18th century.

But even during the lifetime of Śrī Chaitanya, the Brāhmaṇas in general, especially of Navadvīpa, were bitterly opposed to his socio-religious ideology and the methods he adopted to make it accepted by the people. Tradition has it that the Bhattachāryas of the place on one occasion approached the Qazi to extract an order from him banning Chaitanya's musical processions. It is further recorded that on the day of *Rāsapūrnīmā*, when the great master with his followers were singing the name of Hari in great spiritual ecstasy and exaltation, the Brāhmaṇas were causing the streets of Navadvīpa flow in the blood of hundreds of sacrificed goats. The attitude of the Brāhmaṇas is perfectly understandable since the Chaitanya movement was a direct attack on all they stood for. But at the same time it must be admitted that some of his most important followers, notably Advaita and a few others were themselves Brāhmaṇas ; a considerable number was also recruited from the ranks of Vaidyas (e. g. Narahari Sarkar, Murāri Gupta and Sivānanda Sen) and Kāyasthas (e. g. Rūp, Sanatan and Raghunath Das) who were more or less within the grip of Brahmanical socio-religious code. Even after his death there were Brahmanas and members of the upper castes who joined the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava order and became leaders of the movement, though their number was never very large. Nevertheless the fact remains that the largest number was recruited from commercial and mercantile communities and the lower grades of society. It is significant that even today the largest number of Bengal Vaiṣṇavas hail, from such communities as the Survaṇṇavanīkas, Gandhavanīkas, Tilis, etc., in Western Bengal, and Shahas, Tilis, Kaivartas, Kumbhakarās, Yugis (weavers) and other lower grades in both Eastern and Western Bengal. Equally significant is the fact that the largest number of the Brahmanical and upper caste communities remained and even today does remain both in Western and Eastern Bengal outside the pale of Vaiṣṇavism and are mostly Śaktas or Śaivas. The significance of the fact that the Kayasthas of

Uttara-Raḍha, i. e. Western Bengal north of the Ajay who repudiate the Brahmanical socio-religious order commonly known as Vallali Kulinism, are mostly adherents of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism should not also be missed in this connection.

But the shaking of the Chaitanya movement seems to have gradually roused the Brahmanas and the upper grades of the society to a new social consciousness. This became evident after the country had settled down to a state of comparative peace, security and settled government following the inclusion of the realm into the great all-India empire of Akbar, and after the effects of the Vaiṣṇava revival had made themselves felt. They came gradually to feel that the attitude of sheltered exclusiveness that had led to the loosening of their grip on both the upper and lower grades of the society must now be replaced by a different attitude, an attitude of slow filtration and reserved assimilation so far as the lower grades and ordinary folk were concerned and rounding it off by Brahmanical ideology so far as Vaiṣṇavism was concerned. The process they adopted for the purpose is not known, but we can catch a fair glimpse of the results. In any case, an analysis of the different *Mangala Kāvya*s, especially the later *Chandī*, *Annadā* and *Dharmamangalas* of Raḍha seem to reveal an increasing in-take of Brahmanical elements while the *Manasā-mangalas* and the *gītikā* series, mainly issuing from Eastern Bengal remain throughout comparatively free from them. Even the various Bengali adaptations and translations of the epics and the purāṇas reveal increasingly with time infiltration of Brahmanical elements into their texture; here also, those issued from Eastern Bengal are comparatively free in this respect and retain their popular character. In respect of Vaiṣṇavism the rounding off process by Brahmanical ideology is even more evident. Śrī Chaitanya's direct emphasis on simple love, faith and devotion came gradually to be woven into a very subtle and intricate texture of Vedantic warp and Upanishadic woof, all around the *līlā* of Raḍha and Kṛishṇa, and later of Chaitanya himself, mainly in the hands of the Goswamis of Vrindavan, the majority of whom were Brahmanas. It is significant that the language they adopted for the purpose was not Bengali but Sanskrit. True indeed, the ordinary people remained untouched by this abstruse metaphysical interpretation of a most human and direct religious doctrine, but it met with acceptance by the Brahmanas themselves and their allied social grades.

The various popular cults like that of Annada and Chandi as well as of Manasa, Sitala, Ghaṭa-Lakshmi, etc. also in their turn came gradually to be accepted by the higher castes. Living side by side century after century with their covering shell shaken off and yet retaining their superior aloofness arising directly from their economic superiority, the Brahmanas and the upper castes on the one hand and the Vaishnavas and the followers of various popular cults on the other—the latter always nearer the sources of production on which stood the social structure of the realm—came to evolve a better understanding between the two tendencies. But this fact notwithstanding, the Brahmanas and their allied grades succeeded gradually in regaining hold on the social body and undoing much that Śrī Chaitanya had achieved. All this had been possible because of the comparative peace and social stability in which the realm found itself after its inclusion in the administration of the Grand Mughals and the powerful upper caste Hindu interests had re-asserted themselves as direct or indirect props of the administrative machinery.

The attitude of the Muslim courts and the nobility had usually been, we have already seen, one of friendly toleration so far as Vaishnavism was concerned, and of direct patronage and support in respect of the popular socio-religious cults, in a word the culture of the people. Converts to the Faith of the Prophet were mostly from the lower grades, and in a smaller number from those who directly or indirectly felt the pressure of Brahmanical persecution. Of those belonging to the latter category, a certain number came from the Brahmanical and other higher grades; these paradoxically enough became the staunchest adherents and protagonists of the new faith. But converts from the ordinary ranks, i.e. the lower grades changed hardly anything by changing their faith; indeed their day to day life with its round of toil and pleasure went on in much the same way. Even as Muslims they more often than not continued to sing and enjoy the Vaishnava *Kirtanas*, their old *Bauls* and *Bhatials*, Sakta and Saiva lyrics, Radha-Kṛishṇa songs, all directly or indirectly tinged with Hindu religious ideas and thoughts, and participate, as they used to do before their conversion, in the so-called Hindu socio-religious rituals and performances. Members of the lower grade Hinduism, i.e. the ordinary people in their turn also came to understand the religion and social ideology of their Muslim

brethren better than they did when Islam had appeared before them clad in the armour of power and authority and was confined to a small section of the ruling race, military aristocracy and a few converts from upper caste Hinduism. This mutual reapproachment was made largely possible by the attitude of the Muslim Sufi saints and their adherents on one side and that of the Vaishṇava Kīrtanīyas on the other, both holding on mystic love and devotion as the main article of their respective faiths, and bringing into existence a new order of roving religious mendicants known as Auls and Bauls whose members were drawn from both Muslims and Hindus of ordinary ranks. In fact these Auls and Bauls were the bridge-stone of rural Bengali social-structure throughout the mediaeval times. It is not without significance that Seraj-ud-daulah, the last independent Muslim ruler of Bengal was a great admirer of Ramaprasad and his Sakta Baul songs, and many an upper caste Hindu landlord were devotees of the Muslim *pīrs*, darveshes and auliyas.

This, then, is roughly the sociological background against which the story of the culture of mediaeval Bengal can best be read and understood. Art and literature that are essentially products of the court and the upper class suffer but little when read in the context of political and dynastic history ; but those that are largely the products of the people in general, as in mediaeval Bengal, have got to be related to the context of the larger sociological background that reflects not only the attitude of the court and the upper classes but that of the masses also as a whole. However, the main streams of creative expression of the people's mind that emerge from the moving current of larger Bengali social life are now clear ; they are the same in the realm of art as in that of literature and may be viewed as a whole. *First*, there are the age-old themes and subjects of the Epics and the Purāṇas, but, it must be kept in view, almost always and invariably in their local versions. Historians of Bengali literature often represented the Bengali Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata as translations of Sanskrit originals ; nothing can be farther from the truth. Indeed, they are adaptations and the local elements in the narrative and a different mental approach are unmistakable. Contemporary Bengali life and society not only impart new colour but also new meaning and significance into them. So are also the Bengali versions of the Purāṇas wherein the Pauranic myths and legends with

their gods and goddesses receive a new meaning and significance. This is equally evident in both art and literature. *Secondly*, there were the endless yearnings of people's minds round the divinities of Love and fear that used to keep company with them in all their vocations ; Chāṇḍī, Annada or Annapūrṇa, Śiva, Manasa, Śītala, Ghāṭa-Lakshmi, Shashṭhī, and other totemistic and animistic deities, not even excluding the cult of the tiger-deity popularly known as Daskhiṇa-*raya* in lower Bengal, particularly the Sundarbans, where the tiger was veritably the king. These also, both in art and literature, were heavily tinged with elements of contemporary secular life. *Thirdly*, there were the traditional mythological and semi-historical tales, legends and narratives in which man and animals were equal partners and round the romance of which the social mind extended itself in love and imagination, irrespective of Hindus and Muslims. These tales and legends were drawn from both Muslim, mainly preserved in Persian, and local Hindu traditions preserved in older Sanskrit and Prakrit traditions or the living current of oral tradition ; but both were heavily loaded with elements drawn from contemporary socio-religious life, and both Hindus and Muslims participated in it. *Fourthly*, there was contemporary secular life itself, a life of daily toil with the realities of nature and existence, a life of love and hate, of simplicity and cunning, of charity and exploitation, of humility and parade, of hard matter and ever elusive spirit. This life was the same with the Hindus as with the Muslims and both participated equally in the creative expressions of this life, in the long series of narrative ballads so far as literature is concerned and stray pieces of terracotta reliefs and paṭa-paintings in respect of visual art. *Fifthly*, there was that eternal and all-consuming human emotion called love and devotion that binds earth and heaven in one united whole, and brings all forms and shades of experience from the purely physical pleasure of the senses to the highest spiritual exaltation and blissful exhilaration issuing from it, into one indivisible life process. This vital life-process found creative expression around the very popular theme of Radha and Kṛishṇa, at one end of which there is the eternal cry of the body for the body and at the other the complete union of the soul with the soul, where there is only the One and Indivisible. In art this theme, surged with great emotional fervour, sought expression in different forms round the Radha-Kṛishṇa legend ; in literature in

endless lyric verses known as Vaishnava *padāvalīs* and stray smaller lyrics, also round the same Radha-Krishna legend. *Sixthly*, there was that world of fury and destruction, of despair and desolation, of ruin and hatred wrought by both man and nature in the face of which ordinary man's efforts proved futile and fruitless. This world was presided over by Sakti in his various manifestations—the mystic power-cult around which grew up another small series of lyrics known as Sakta *padāvalīs*, less known to this day, and also stray smaller lyrics including those of Ramaprasad in the mid-18th century. *Seventhly*, there was that strong element of the deepest craving for the beyond of all, for the something that was ever at the unattainable, unrealisable farthest reach of love, of devotion, indeed of all human cravings and endeavours. This eternal quest of spirit from the depth of matter lies latent but strong in those that are nearest to nature and her environs. In literature this quest finds expression in the *Aul-Baul* and *Bhatial* songs that are all highly tinged with an other-worldliness, a spiritual detachment that comes from the depths of a toiling and struggling existence. In art expression of this quest is limited but is not altogether absent. *Lastly*, there was the realm essentially and almost exclusively of the intellect, a realm that was the preserve of the few, i. e. the upper Hindu aristocracy that was the main prop of the alien political domination, the Brahmanas and the upper castes. Creatively this realm of the intellect is, so far as mediaeval Bengal is concerned, unproductive, almost barren. There is hardly any expression in Bengal's art and literature, and whatever there is in respect of the humanities and the sciences is traditional and analytical, interpretative and discursive, and is preserved mainly in Sanskrit. Corresponding expression in art is to be found in the various traditional and hieratic cult images of gods and goddess wrought in mud and straw and according to age-old iconographic and iconometric canons. The Muslim court and ruling class had no active creative expression in either art or literature ; of course architecture is one exception. There is no specimen of Persian or Urdu literature worth mentioning that can be ascribed to Bengal during this long period. Mughal court-painting which along with Indo-Muslim architecture is undoubtedly the finest product of Indo-Muslim culture and civilisation, hardly ever directly touched Bengal and influenced Bengali painting except in certain details of colour and linear composition, and that too indirectly.

THE EYES OF YOUTH

By INDIRA DEVI CHAUDHURANI

I have seen the eyes of Youth following Age,
Old Age that plods its weary way alone,—
Alone with pain and memories and fear.

What do they say, the questioning eyes of Youth ?
—Is it mere wondering that such a frame,
Fashioned erstwhile in their own image fair,
Should now be broken, bent and past all use,
Decrepit, worn, lost to all sense of shame ?
Or is it pity mingled with the pride
Of glowing health and beauty's glorious dower ?
Do they despise and mock ?—or shrink and shun ?
Or feel the misery they needs must hate ?
O cruel eyes ! be kind, be just, be brave,
O eyes of Youth ! look, yonder yawns the grave.

August, 1938.

THE WOUNDED HEART

A SHORT STORY

By ANNADA SANKAR RAY

I

VISITING Almora in the year of the Bengal famine I found unsmiling faces there also. "By December," people were saying, "famine will have set in here too." I was depressed.

In broken Hindi I was explaining my dejection to my banker without realising that the person who was talking to him in Kumaoni was also a Bengali. He was dressed like a Kumaoni in a high-collared coat buttoned up to his throat, Jodhpur breeches and an Indian cap. On his forehead was a spot of sandalwood paste. Big and tall, a splendid figure, he was over fifty. And he was clean-shaven.

Turning to me he said in perfect Bengali, "Speaking of dejection, why, even in Kashmir—which is called the earthly paradise—people don't get enough to eat. There's no part of India I haven't visited and I've not seen a place where people eat their fill."

I don't know how much Shahji understood but he wagged his head in agreement. I had been thinking of going to Kashmir but this made me give up the idea. Noticing my perplexity the banker said in Hindi, "Haven't you met Mallikji? He was a political leader. Now he has heart disease."

When I heard he was the proprietor of the Nanda Devi Restaurant I realised that he must be the person of whom the local Bengalis spoke. It seems he had been an absconder in the Alipur bomb case.

"Oh! You!" I greeted him. Mallik was now Mallikji! He said, "Namaste." Finishing our business at the bank we got up together.

Mallik told me his restaurant was nearby. I replied that I had nothing in hand at the moment and accompanied him.

His flat was over the restaurant. From the verandah the Himalayas were visible. Several peaks. The natural scenery enraptured both of us. We spoke of Kashmir again.

"As I was saying. If you had gone to Kashmir you wouldn't have found the pleasure of seeing happy people. I've not found it anywhere in the whole of India. What doesn't exist in the country, doesn't exist, whether you or I look for it. If you want that pleasure, take leave and go outside of India. This accursed country—" as he spoke his eyes filled.

One would not think to look at him that he had ever been outside India. Elsewhere than the Andamans. So I asked, "Which countries outside India have you seen?"

"England, Switzerland, almost the whole of Western Europe."

I had liked those places too. "How long were you there?" I asked.

He thought a little and then replied, "For as long as Rama was in exile."

"Four—teen years!" I was astounded. There was not the slightest hint of it in his speech or manner or dress.

Seeing I didn't believe him he gave an English laugh and asked my pardon in French. Then he started singing a German song: "Herz, mein Herz, sei nicht beklommen—"

The pathos in his voice made tears start to my eyes. "Tell me," I urged him, "Why are you so sad? If it is not a secret—"

I don't remember all that he said in reply and if I did the time has not yet come to record it, so I am writing only a part.

And I wonder where he is now.

II

It was the time of the Swadeshi Movement.¹ I was young. Gazing at the land of my birth it seemed to me something more than mere earth. Was it not the clay image of the Divine Mother? Do those who despise us as image worshippers know that this soil, this water, this air—each and all is but an image? The image of Mother India!

Young men of today will smile but in those days we really believed in the existence of some one called Mother India, just as in the Mother of the World. We used to address her reverently in Sanskrit

¹ 1904-10.

saying : "Tvam hi Durgā daśapraharanadhārini kamalā kamaladala-vihārini vāṇi vidyādāyini!"¹ In my heart I said : "Mother, if Thou art Power, why is Thy power dormant ? Mother, show forth Thy power ; slay the buffalo demon ! O Lion-mounted, the lion is committing excesses. Please curb him !"

You laugh. But in those days we never made the mistake of laughing. Every one of us had his baptism of fire. Inwardly we burned. That inner fire burned outside too. You will laugh again but we were deeply convinced that the Mother would literally awaken some day. Then we would behold with our own eyes the awakened goddess taking up her ten weapons in her ten hands and giving battle. In Calcutta one day, in Patna the next, in Delhi the day after, she would win combat after combat. In a few days not an enemy would be left and the country free.

Slowly we came to our senses. All that might have been possible in the Golden Age ; it was not possible in the Age of Iron. The Mother had distributed Her strength among us, Her children. We were Her arms and we would wield Her weapons. We ourselves it was who would awaken and fight.

Next we set about acquiring arms and learning their use. We learned how to make bombs and gunpowder. We learnt it all. We thought no one would come to know of it ; we did not know that walls have ears. Members of our group were arrested. I too would have been arrested if father had not had a drug house with a side business in contraband liquor. He used to get his stuff from ships' officers and was friendly with them in that connection. They dispatched me secretly to England. In those days there was no bother with passports. England gave me refuge. Voluntary exile saved me from transportation for life. Englishmen rescued me from the wrath of their countrymen.

After this my hatred of the British disappeared of itself. Living in England I discovered they were not devils, beasts, or locusts but human beings like us. England is earth. That earth is not mere earth but Mother Earth. Reverence for it was born in me. In my heart I began to do homage to Mother England. I said : "Mother, thou art an awakened goddess. Thy unfettered power is spread.

1 "Thou art Durga, the Wielder of Ten Mighty Weapons, Thou art Lakshmi, seated on the Lotus Throne, Thou art Saraswati, the Giver of Wisdom."

How many colonies, ports, marts, battle-ships, and cannons bear witness to it ! And how great a literature, how noble a religion, how advanced a science, how magnanimous a democracy ! Mother, to Thine own glory let India have her freedom !”

On boarding the ship I had changed my name. Money was sent to me under it from home. So I did not lack money. I studied for the London matriculation and went about attending meetings. Watching how Ireland regained her independence was my chief interest. Days passed in discussion with workers and leaders of the Irish Home Rule movement. At that time another movement was taking shape among the Irish ; it was called the Sinn Fein. My sympathies were with it. I went to Ireland many times in connection with it. My friends urged me to study law in Dublin. But the attraction of London was irresistible. It was full of refugees of many nationalities then. Some Russian, some Chinese, some Turkish, some Polish. They used to meet in particular restaurants. I used to frequent those restaurants in order to get to know them. But I did not understand their methods of action. And they didn't understand Indian politics. So I got along best with the Irish. Yet my heart yearned to mix with free peoples. The Russians, the Chinese, and the Turks were at least free. Of course the Poles were not ; they were an exception.

In Indian circles I came and went without constraint. There were several groups among them and I was on social terms with both the moderates and the extremists. But my deepest friendship was with Krishna Varma. Whenever anyone went to see him I was sent for. Once I found that a barrister from South Africa had come. His name was Gandhi. You're surprised ? Yes, he was Mahatma Gandhi. He wasn't a Mahatma then, just very plain Mr. None of us ever dreamed such a harmless simple fellow would one day be India's great leader and proclaim open rebellion. Still his conversation upset us. Later we recovered ourselves over cups of coffee.

Oh, you'd like to hear what was said ? All right, I'll tell you. I remember it distinctly even though it took place in 1908 or '09. Savarkar was there that day. Yes, your Veer Savarkar. Strange, isn't it ? Who knew that one day he would be the helmsman of the Hindu Mahasabha ? I didn't notice anything particularly sectarian about him then. However that may be, I was saying—

Savarkar said to Gandhi : "Suppose a huge snake is rushing at you with its hood raised. There is no way of escape. Behind you is a deep ditch. In your hand you have a stick. You can save yourself with it if you wish. What will you do ? Kill or be killed ?"

Gandhi did not hesitate. He answered at once : "I would drop the stick lest I feel tempted to kill it."

You're amazed ? It was amazing. I had never in my life heard anything like it before. That's why it is still so clear in my memory even after so many years.

It took our breath away—all those of us were present there that day. Would the snake spare us if we threw aside the stick ! It would strike as it liked. Savarkar said, "Gandhi, you may be my guru in religious matters, but you're incapable of being a political leader." That was what we all thought.

Gandhi went back to South Africa some days later. We forgot him. No-violence meant nothing in politics. It was pure madness. We did not even discuss it among ourselves. What we did argue about usually was whether *swaraj* could be gained by just proving our fitness for it or whether it would have to be taken by force. If resort to force was decided upon where would we get arms ? How to learn their use when we got them ?

There were some among us who said that war with Germany was certain sooner or later. Then Germany would supply the arms. And she too would teach us their use. It alarmed me even to think of such a thing. I was a sincere admirer of the English. No, not of their government, of the people. If the only way to get weapons and military training was to be a German agent in the coming war, I did not want them. But I, and many like me, thought then there was another way. It was to fight on the side of the English.

When war actually broke out those others were not to be found. They were already in Berlin. We went and informed the British authorities we were prepared to fight. Let them take us into the armed forces. Personally I preferred the artillery. It was the dream of many years. We danced attendance on the government. But why should the lady let herself be deluded ? The authorities replied that we were not suitable. That is, our politics was unsuitable.

So each of us went back to his own work. I could not put my mind on anything. Such an opportunity does not come twice in a

lifetime. And it was lost ! What was the use of living ? My mental indisposition resulted in physical ill-health. The doctors said only a trip to Switzerland would cure me. Unwillingly I bid good-bye to England. Arriving in Switzerland I found even that tiny country free and prosperous. Man had tamed the mountains and set cities on their backs. All the comfort one could want was there, all the sport, all the entertainment. I liked it even better than England. Political refugees came there from many countries.

While in Switzerland news of the Czar's abdication reached me. It appeared there had been a revolution in Russia. I became impatient with joy and felt like flying there but how could I ? I had no wings. All the politicals were excited. When a revolution had broken out in one country it might break out in others as well, in Austria, in Germany, in Turkey. To myself I added, in India. No sooner did this idea come to me than I was cured. I invited my Lucerne friends and feasted them. But who knew that in the same country that very same year a second revolution would take place ! Why it happened could not be made out at all. I asked my Russian friends. They were simply furious. Not with me, but with the Bolsheviks. "They're bandits !" they exclaimed, "They're thieves ! That's not a revolution of theirs : it's usurpation by despoilers."

My doubts were not set at rest. They grew by degrees. Among my acquaintances was a Marxist. Little by little he explained to me that the history of mankind is full of class conflicts. A particular phase had begun with the rise of the bourgeoisie at the time of the French Revolution. It had come to an end with the fall of Kerensky and the collapse of the bourgeoisie. Historically the chapter of the workers had now opened. So it would be in all countries. The question I asked on hearing this was whether such was to be the reward of those who had given their lives, suffered imprisonment and been sent into exile for a hundred years fighting Czardom and the Czar ? Scarcely six months had they ruled when their time was up ! Their epoch, the epoch that was to reward so many thousands of martyrs, had come to an end ! In reply the Marxist said History had already done away with them, Lenin was only the instrument.

I had not studied History. If this was its correct interpretation there was no pleasure in studying it. In my heart I turned to Mother India : "Mother, long have we adored Thee reverently, for Thee we

have swung from the gallows, died in exile, rotted in jail—was it for this? Is this your justice—to depose us after only a few months' power and place upon the throne the working class! Why then should we shed our blood so?"

I lost my faith in God and therefore in Mother India. If there is no justice in the world there is no God either, nor Mother of the country. More political refugees arrived from Russia, this time fleeing the oppression of the Bolsheviks. Listening to their talk of class hatred I became convinced that History really is full of class war. That being so, the bourgeoisie could not rule always! A day would come, whether in two months, two years, or two centuries, when they would have to revert to their humble station. The fruit of sacrifice was the same as the fruit of selfishness. Then why should we sacrifice? For its own sake.

My heart sank. Before that there had been nothing wrong with it; it became affected then. The families of those who had died to bring autocracy to an end had had to flee their country for their lives. They were now destitute. There was no one to send them money from home; they were dependent upon the pity of foreigners. Would the same thing come to pass some day in India? Would my relatives be hounded out of the country like them? Was this the way gratitude would be shown to me?

Then came the revolution in Germany. It was unsuccessful. Then a revolution could fail! I was relieved. With the sudden termination of the War a nightmare had ended. I breathed freely again. Going to Paris I took lodgings there in order to see the Peace Conference. I was at Versailles the day the Treaty was signed. The spectacle of Germany's humiliation moved me to tears. And I thought to myself that if their revolution had been successful such would not have been their fate! The middle-class seemed to me weak-kneed; they bowed their heads under the insult too easily. That was why History imposed Versailles upon them.

The result was I lost confidence in my own class. Without noticing it myself I became a Marxist. No, not a Communist. Just a Marxist, in the general sense. And in theory, not in practice. Like a Hindu boy ceases to believe in idols without signing his name in the Brahmo Samaj, I became a Marxist without becoming a Communist. A new page in my life opened. An idol-worshipper, I broke first of

all the image of Mother India. The sacred thread I surrendered was the sacred slogan, 'Bande Mataram.' After that I travelled widely but I did not get permission to go to Russia. Perhaps if I had waited longer I might have. But I was eager to get back to my own country. I made a great mistake in returning. I imagined the country would be completely changed and the change worth seeing. The permission was obtained with much trouble. Assurance was given me no case against me would be instituted. My companions had been pardoned. They were back from the Andamans. So it was not difficult to pardon me.

I found the Non-co-operation Movement in full swing. Its leader was Gandhi. People who can make a person as singular as Gandhi their leader are capable of anything. The mood of the country made me despair. I concluded it was preparing to go back three thousand years when I saw Jainism being applied to politics. For one thing India is an unbearably hot country. When instructions were given to wear *khaddar* on top of that I lost my temper completely. And I applied for a passport when I heard next that drinking was a sin. A passport to go back to Europe. But in the meantime my admirers had circulated the report that while in Ireland I had acquired the forbidden knowledge and wanted to teach it to the young men of Bengal. The report caused alarm in official quarters. I not only did not get a passport but was detained without trial in the Vellore Jail in Madras. When I was not destined to drink what could be done? I started spinning. I had to non-co-operate with Madras cooking and give up eating flesh. Everyone regarded me as a genuine non-co-operator. But I was dying in the heat. Corresponding with the Government I got transferred to Almora. That is, to Almora Jail. Three years later I was released.

There was no hope of getting permission to go. Yet I felt the attraction of Europe keenly. I went to Bombay and opened a restaurant there, with the object of getting drink free. Whenever a ship docked I'd go to strike up an acquaintance with the European passengers and drag them in for a drink and a chat over the wine glass. Fresh news from Europe came to me that way and the best wines went into my cellar. Bombay suited my very well. Occasionally I went down to Ceylon by sea to go on board the big steamers at Colombo. On those I used to get a taste of Europe.

If I had been younger I would have run away again on one of them. Adventure is not becoming to middle age. And there's jail if you're caught.

While in Bombay I was closely associated with the Congress. Becoming a member I discovered that none of the leaders were devout Jains. They followed Gandhi for another reason. He was the only person who knew what Civil Disobedience was. The time for it no sooner came than I started spinning again, dressed in *khaddar*, and, taking my last sip of liquor, girded myself to cut down toddy palms. My Marxist materialism could not deter me and I shouted at the top of my voice, 'Bande Mataram', 'Allah Ho Akbar', and 'Mahatma Gandhiki Jai'.

I won't enlarge upon it. Before coming out of jail several years later with a broken heart and shattered health I read Marx and Lenin thoroughly. And I discovered the reason for the futility of Gandhi. I wanted to set to work again with new energy but my heart disease compelled me to leave Bombay. Almora is convenient because one can live quietly here. There is not the noisy disturbance there is at other hill stations. My reason for living in a hill station is that I simply cannot stand the heat. Europe spoiled me. I wonder all the time when I'll get permission to go. I've applied several times. But there is no hope until the war is over.

What do you think ? Will it be over soon ? No, I also do not hope for it.

III

That day Mallik would not let me go until I had eaten something. So I asked him to dine with us. He agreed. Several days later however when my wife wrote formally inviting him, the reply came from his nephew. Mallik was away. He had gone to Nainital without saying when he would be back.

My Almora friend, Lahiri, remarked when he heard it, "Are you crazy ? Do you think Mallikji will dine at your hotel ? Who doesn't know the cook is a Mohammedan !"

Hurt, I answered, "But Mallik was in Europe for fourteen years."

"Yes, but he is no longer the same Mallik. Now he is Mallikji.

Perhaps you didn't notice what a big spot of sandalwood paste he wears on his forehead and that a little pigtail dangles in his long hair."

"But he believes in Marxist materialism!"

"Maybe that's why he understands material things so well. He knows money."

Nevertheless he had really gone to Nainital. I came to know of it in another connection. Lahiri joked about it, "Then he went to avoid your invitation. He won't be back while you're here."

Lahiri told me frankly that Mallikji was a business man and that business prospered in a pious conservative place like Almora if caste and religious scruples were observed.

About a month later I met Mallikji on my way back from Uday Shankar's studio. He apologised for not being able to keep my invitation. I noticed he was wearing European dress, a light grey suit and a felt hat. There was no sandalwood paste on his forehead.

"By the way," he asked, "how does your *baburchi* cook?"

"Come and see for yourself. Tell me when it will be convenient."

"Is there time for it now? I've got to go back to Nainital tomorrow! I'm opening a new restaurant there, you know. I'm naming it the 'Restaurant Internationale'."

"Is that so?" I was pleased. "Are you shutting down here?"

"No, my nephew's taking over."

"But why Nainital all of a sudden?"

"Not quite all of a sudden. I've been thinking about it for a long time. If I want to get a passport I've got to begin trying for it from now. And the best way to persuade is through the stomach."

I laughed. "I know I've sunk pretty low," he said gravely. "Is it the first time? Is it a small thing that I've sat here in Almora playing Mallikji all these years? The real thing is I need some capital. What can I take to Europe? My father is no longer alive to send me money from home."

His last words were pathetic. Sympathy overcame me. I said, "But the country expects a great deal from you, Mallik—"

"Not -ji," he interrupted, "just plain Mallik." Thrusting a finger familiarly through my buttonhole he added, "When the country's ready I'll come back. If I'm still alive—"

Then he wanted to know whether Tulon could cook *boeuf roti* and *ragout de mouton* if ordered. I joked, "If he does roast the beef, who'll taste it, you?"

He was not to be put out. "How will I get my strength back if I don't? But not roast beef, *boeuf roti*. My menu is being printed in French there. The War has brought with it people of various nationalities. I must have their company. For the present that will be my Europe, my elixir. Ray, you must come some day. Thank your wife for me, please. I'll be delighted if she comes too."

Translated from the Bengali by Lila Ray.

HOW THE ACADEMY IDEA CAME*

By J. H. COUSINS

IN the early 'twenties I had generated five years' enthusiasm for the arts and crafts of India and for as much of its literature as I could absorb from English translations. The aspiration and metaphysical imagination that radiated through all these were sustenance and stimulus to my own. But I had discovered on my occasional journeys that India's right hand knew little or nothing of what her left hand was doing in the creation of things of beauty ; and the ignorance was mutual from left to right and between head and foot. This, I felt, ought not to be ; and at times a seed-thought indicated that it was germinating in the hinterland of my mind and waiting for attention.

On an educational journey by stages to Sind, while developing a subject before an audience in Karachi, waxing dithyrambic over the superb achievements of the Indian genius in the past and lamenting the paucity of artistic creation in the then present, and the lack of emulative knowledge as to both, the idea flashed into my mind that a central body should be organised as a clearing-house of information on art-activities between the various cultural areas of India ; and for an idea to flash into my mind under such circumstances means that it also flashes out of it into expression. At the end of my address the chairman, Mr. T. L. Vaswani, an eminent educationist, emphasised my suggestion. The audience applauded. I returned to my educational work in the South with a bee in my bonnet.

And so in 1923 I set out from Calcutta on a tour of research into the cultural conditions of as much of India as I could cover in a limited time, and into the possibility of founding centres for the encouragement of local art-activities which might become the eyes and ears and mouths of what I had begun to think of as a central organisation fulfilling the needed purpose of record and exchange, and perhaps becoming the means of recognition of artistic and literary "Immortals" after the manner of Academies elsewhere.

My tour began with two post-graduate lectures in the University of Calcutta on July 2 and 3 (1923) on "The Cultural Aspect of the Renaissance in India". Prior to this I had an interview with Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, known as the "Bengal Tiger"—partly, perhaps,

* This article will appear as the Introduction to a book on An Indian Academy to be shortly published by Kitabistan, Allahabad.

from his expression of fearlessness aided by wide-awake eyes and a walrus moustache, partly from a habit of expressing his fearlessness in action that, just then, ran contrary to the will of Government House, and had somewhat complicated the Vice-Chancellorship. He inquired of the programme of my tour, and lit up with sympathetic interest at my idea of seeing things for myself and acting accordingly. A lecture to students in the University Institute on "The Value of Indian Culture to the World", at which Sir Ashutosh presided, gave me a good start and assured an audience for the main lectures not only by the response from the students but by the full reports of it in the newspapers.

The first of the two post-graduate lectures had the sub-title "General and Artistic". I had talked, written and exhibited so much on Indian painting that I had acquired a collection of titles such as scholar, expert, and authority, to none of which I laid claim, and I could talk for an hour, without examples, on the principles and achievements of art in general and Indian art ancient and modern in particular, without a note, an accomplishment that stood me in good stead on occasions when the light failed in lantern lectures. All the same, at the post-graduate lecture I kept my volatile mind in bounds by a sketch of my theme, and I was helped by the presence, among others, of the painters at the head of the Bengal revival, Babu Abanindranath and Babu Gaganendranath Tagore, and the scholar-critic, Babu O. C. Gangoly, editor of *Rupam*, who appeared to me to be the fore-runner of a needed school of Indian art-criticism. The attention of audience was very helpful to continuity and freedom of expression, and their applause at the end had a hearty unacademical sound. Sir Ashutosh drew me aside and said I must report my research in twelve lectures for the University which would publish them. This was a new thought, a thought with many thoughts converging to and diverging from it, and they kept on diverging and converging and making circles in my head all night in my lodging on an upper floor in College Square.

A good beginning had apparently been made in getting the Academy idea into the academical consciousness. But my personal test was to come in the second lecture on the next evening when I could speak on the literary aspect of the renaissance in India, of which I knew only the translated spirit, and sensed verse-technique through Romanised transliterations. I prayed hard that my inadequacy would not cancel the apparently good effect of the first lecture.

An even larger audience than the first came to the second lecture and the same eminents, and I appeared to get over the second hurdle of my race without fracture or concussion. This I thought at the time was due to the fact that the audience forgave my lack of knowledge of the authors and the texts of three thousand years of production in say twelve major languages which, after all, could not be expected to be mastered by one mind in five years, and were happy to hear of literary doings elsewhere in India in tongues of which they in Bengal knew little more than myself. I was about to descend from the lecturer's rostrum, having been told that there were no formalities at such functions, when Sir Ashutosh held me up and addressed the audience to the effect that, although votes of thanks were not usually given at post-graduate lectures, the matter which had been put before them was most important, and he felt they owed the lecturer special thanks not only for the two lectures but for the research on which he was starting into the cultural conditions of the various areas of India as a preliminary to the organising of interchange between them. Calcutta University, Sir Ashutosh said, would be specially interested, and he repeated his personal invitation to me to return in due time and give a series of lectures on my research. The press reported the invitation, and I felt that the auspiciousness in which most people in India liked to embark on enterprises had been given to me too.

Next day, July 4, 1923, I gave a somewhat prophetic talk under the auspices of the Indian Society of Oriental Art on "The Future of Indian Art" and passed on for a four-day visit to Santiniketan, where I again prophesied, talked on the Irish literary revival, met and listened to Dr. Radhakamal Mukherjee and Dr. Winternitz, and had private conversations with Rabindranath on the possibility of translating his Bengali poetry into similar verse-forms, and discussions with his staff on education. Here the Academy idea did not flourish. A great original creative genius pervaded the atmosphere and pivoted attention from prayers under trees at sunrise to celestial on a roof at moon rise. Proposed academies were distant and shy abstractions in the presence of such a radiant personality. Yet such personality was the stuff out of which Academies were made.

At Patna (July 10) the Academy idea emerged again. I think (for I have no record at hand nearly 22 years from the event) that the first meeting for the embodying of the idea was due to the initia-

tive of mine host and hostess, Mr. P. K. Sen, an eminent lawyer, and Mrs. Sen. At 7-30 a. m. a group of interested persons met at the cultured home of Mr. Justice Prafulla R. Das, brother of the famous political leader, Mr. C. R. Das. Two large-size paintings of the Bengal school made a distinguished and appropriate background, Abanindranath's masterly "Aurangzeb," and Surendranath Kar's lovely human study, "Companions of the Road", of which, when I saw it in its first exhibition in Calcutta, I had made the only fairly full-length study outside Bengal, perhaps within it. After a discussion of the Academy topic, in which another eminent lawyer, Mr. Hassan Imam, joined, a preliminary group was formed; and I passed on feeling that a good start had been made, a step towards organisation, as Calcutta had been the first step towards the artistic and literary materials of an Academy.

My tour took me through Benares, Agra, Delhi, Amritsar, Srinagar, (Kashmir), Hyderabad (Sind), Karachi, Ahmedabad, Bombay, back to my base, at Adyar, Madras, where I was Principal of the Brahmavidya Ashrama under the inspiration and guidance of Mrs. Annie Besant. Between lectures on Indian culture and the principles of education, I had numerous conversations with individuals who undertook to gather information on art and literature in their area; and as this was a matter of time, and called for standards and system, my preliminary field-work could only gather general impressions, and leave details to the answering of a questionnaire which I would send out after my return to Adyar with a fairly clear conception of the work in hand.

Certain items of the tour stood out with special hope: the Assembly hall of Benares Hindu University, crowded, with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the chair, when I spoke to the students and the staff on "The Orientation of Literary and Art-Criticism"; the packed steps from the water-side in Srinagar up to the crammed hall of the Sanatana Dharma Sabha some more steps below the Raghunath Temple where I had to bawl "Art in Education" on one evening and "India's Message to the World" on the next, through a window of the hall in the hope of its reaching the few English-knowing people among the multitude outside who knew no word of what I was erupting and yet were as quiet as could be, and when somebody who caught a point clapped, clapped also with special enthusiasm. A hint of

an extension of an All-India Academy into an Inter-Continental Academy came through the Chairman, Pandit Dattatreya, a Minister of the State Government. He announced on the first night that he would then make the Chairman's opening speech for both occasions, and say nothing on the second, so that he might say what he wanted to say without a break. In half an hour he made a keen resumé, the first of its kind, of my writings upto then, on Education, Indian Culture, Philosophy and Literature, and, much to my private pleasure, stressed my poetry, thus making a fine demonstration of the interpretation of West to East. Two nights later I gave a public lecture in the hall of the College that Mrs. Annie Besant had founded when the preceding Maharaja was a member of the Theosophical Society. The chair was taken by the Chief Secretary to Government, Lala Shiv Das. I spoke on "The Five Fingers of Education", physical, mental, emotional, social and religious, as related to the five concentric circles of life, individual, local, provincial, national, inter-national. At the close the chairman said I had begun my lecture by disclaiming all critical intention regarding education in the State and asked that what I had to say should be taken as the speculations of an educational Idealist. My ideals, he added, were the most drastic criticism that the education of the State could have. Next day I had an autographed invitation for a call on the Maharaja. But here, as elsewhere, the Academy idea was crowded out by other interests. The old Ruler's desire was to know if Mrs. Besant had given up Theosophy for Politics; and it took some diplomatic bush-beating to say that, far from Mrs. Besant's dropping one thing for another, she regarded work for attaining free friendship between India and Britain not as politics but as a patriotic service to both countries. He had, I gathered, heard favourable accounts of my lectures, which was something to be thankful for. My last public appearance in Srinagar on that first visit was a somewhat triumphant failure. A society of mild scientific persons invited me to give them a talk on Indian Painting with lantern slides, which I regard as a demonstration of the Academy at work spreading information from one cultural area to another. I was escorted from my house-boat by a group of heads of society. A voice that was anything but scientific or artistic came from the direction of the college, and when we made to enter the compound we were hustled back by policemen who indicated that no more people were to be admitted.

My escort ascertained that the college hall was jammed full, including the balcony that was suspected of weakness, and the population of the City was on one another's shoulders at all doors and windows and round about. I had admired the craftsmanship of Kashmir and watched artificers at work and thought what a substantial report could be made by a Kashmir Academy to a Central Academy for spreading over the country but it had not occurred to me that the populace below the literacy line would be so keen on the Bengal movement as to need the services of the police to control them. The explanation, however, was more modern and removed the responsibility of popularity from my shoulders to others on which it could be more appreciated. The college students had gatecrashed the mild scientists, and the populace, hearing that there were "pictures" at the college, translated pictures as Charlie Chaplin and marched over to enjoy them. I was hoisted, by permission, through a window behind the screen, a succession of local eminents mounted chairs at intervals, and in that unwonted position made gestures and unheard appeals that induced a slight lull in the deafening hubbub. But the cracking of a bench at one time with the sudden sagging of those who had stood on it and the displacement of an area of humans around it, and at another time a crash of glass as an elbow went through a window, and the expectation of more such diversions, destroyed all hope of even sufficient quiet to allow me to be heard by the scientists in the front rows. So, by dint of yelling into one of the chairman's ears and his yelling into one of mine, we arranged that the slides would be run through the lantern without comment. This took ten minutes of uproarious applause for each slide, particularly for those of familiar Puranic figures, and the meeting closed. Hyderabad (Sind) had an Academy conference and appropriate lectures (August 6, 7). At Karachi the Academy conference was an item of a large garden party (August 8), and the eagerness and enthusiasm of the audience at the place where the Academy idea first struck me was infectious and invigorating. Ahmedabad, on the way home, gave me the fullest idea of the available creative material for a local Academy, this one for the Gujarati area. Senior and Junior literary groups, and the beginnings of a distinctive school of painters under an obviously inspiring master, Ravi Shankar M. Rawal, were full of promise and gave a sense of accomplishment to the Academy confer-

ence, which was one of eight full-length functions in the two days of my visit (August 13, 14). On this visit (or it may have been on another a little later) I was motored to Surat and thrilled by the richness of indigenous skill that only needed recognition and encouragement to reach ancestral perfections. Here the Academy idea found one of its applications. For the transforming of a chaos of unrelated art-craftsmanship into a cosmos of mutual appreciation and helpfulness, I suggested the compilation of a directory of local artists and craftsmen. On a subsequent visit, an exhibition of local arts and Crafts was got up for my edification. Larger paintings in the mediaeval style than I had previously seen were included. I also saw a palm-leaf manuscript said to be a Jain scripture, and remembering recent interest in these by a few scholars, I made a more careful inspection of it than the owner of it had done, and came on a number of old stamp-size paintings in the Hindu manner. And I was shown a long list of artists and artificers that had followed my suggestion of a directory. Bombay was the last place on the tour ; and when I faced a great crowd in the big Cowasji Jahangir Hall (August 17), I was physically and mentally on my last legs. But the interested crowd who had gathered to hear "India's Message to the World" picked me up and pulled me through ; and I got home to Adyar on August 19th after seven crowded and hot weeks, and in an interval, before the opening of the second session of the Brahmavidya Ashrama, drafted the promised questionnaire.

On the day on which the news of the immense earthquake and fires in Japan was in the papers (late in September I think) I sent out over 600 copies of the questionnaire. After some months I received a post card from one of the warmest verbal supporters of the Academy idea hoping that it was taking shape out of the answers to the questionnaire. How could it, I asked in reply, when even he had not taken the trouble to respond ? A young man in the Canarese area asked me if I had a response from it. I replied in the negative and suggested that he might respond. He did in a very fine summary. And that was all. And Sir Ashutosh Mukherji died. So did the Academy idea but this book tells of an effort to resurrect it 20 years later.

THE PROBLEM OF FORM AND CONTENT IN KEATS

By PRABASH JIBAN CHAUDHURY

FORM alone or content alone has no reality which is always form-content. Beauty is 'significant form', as Clive Bell happily terms it. The quarrel between form and content is now a matter of history and aesthetic thinkers are recognising the need for viewing beauty as neither a matter of form alone nor of content (or significance) alone. Croce established this view strongly in his aesthetic theory, and it is now recognised as a sound view by such thinkers as Bosanquet and A. C. Bradley who have written against the error of separating the two factors, form and content. Much writing was necessary for this, as the view that beauty is a matter of form has been voiced by many a great philosopher of the past, Plato, Aristotle and Kant among them, and Hegel, though he said that form and content must harmonise in a work of art, always held them so distinct that it is not wrong to say that he separated them. For him the content of art is reality itself and this takes up a form appropriate to it. Hegel's theory of art is a theory of significance or content.

Keats has been treated as a 'pure poet' by Dr. Bridges and A. C. Bradley, and Middleton-Murry has taken up the tune and elaborated it to his pleasure. But we do not get much evidence in Keats' writings for such a view ; it is not comforting to be told again and again that he is with Shakespeare, that he moved towards 'pure poetry' which is more a matter of form than content. There is of course a feeling in all of us who read Keats' poetry that he is a pure poet and has no socio-ethical designs or philosophical preoccupations, but, as will be shown, we cannot be very sure on this point. Keats' mind was feeling its way to a sound theory of aesthetics and naturally there was the conflict of opposites going on in him. The conflict could not get time enough for a final resolution and it could not even come up on the conscious plane. As a matter of fact, Keats was not conscious of this problem of aesthetics in such clear terms as we have it now, viz. the problem of form and content. But that may be a gain to us in some respects ; we can get what a creative genius

instinctively felt about the problem which is more valuable in a way than an abstract study of it by a philosopher. When we reason we may go wholly wrong while when we feel a thing we may not arrive at clear conclusions yet may be nearing truth.

Let us examine a statement of Keats which is much quoted and discussed.

"I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination—what the imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth—whether it existed before or not—for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love—they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty" (To Bailey, 22nd Nov. 1817).

The plain meaning is this, that Beauty is nothing but our experiences of life raised to a higher and finer plane of existence by intensity. This is 'sublimating' for Keats. In the consciousness of beauty we are extraordinarily aware of our experiences : there is a heightening of consciousness. This condition is not different from the condition of enjoying an experience for its own sake, for the latter is but a means of heightening the experience. Keats does not stand for a detachment in the sense of Kant which is an anaemic conception and which sees beauty only in the form ignoring the concrete content or life-experience. Keats wants 'intensity' and 'fine excess' which come from a kind of disinterestedness towards any intellectual or moral issues connected with the experience. This may be called transmutation of life by art but we should not overlook the fact that the content is of no minor importance. Keats wanted in art (or beauty), 'passions' sublimated, 'intensity' and 'fine excess' and also 'unobtrusiveness' ; he wanted the poet to have 'negative capability' which Shakespeare possessed enormously. We have to keep all these in our minds and develop a coherent notion of beauty with regard to the question of its form and content.

"—and at once it struck me what quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean negative capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (To George and Thomas Keats, Dec. 28, 1817). This speaks of the view that the lover of beauty is no philosopher, his joy is in the instinctive enjoyment of a content which is detached from the rest of the world in the sense that the

question of its reality, unreality or of its good and evil, does not arise at all. Again,

"We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon...poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject" (To Reynolds, Feb. 3, 1818).

The subject of poetry cannot be but experience, 'passions', but they should not be treated with and distorted by our thought or philosophy, they should rather be enjoyed for their own sakes intensely and thus sublimated. The poet having negative capability treats all passions with equal interest, joys and sorrows alike, and so enjoys them. Keats' own poetry shows that his romanticism is primitive : he sees things in purity without the medium of thought or sentiment. Keats wants the experiences of life in its purity to be the content of his poetry. For a poet like him, who can disinterestedly enjoy an experience for its own sake, enjoys joys and pains alike, for all is beauty for him.

"She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die ;
And joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu, and aching pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips ;
Ay, in the very temple of delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst joy's grape against his palate fine :"

(*Ode to Melancholy*).

Thus he who can enjoy joy intensely can also enjoy pain, he is a poet for whom beauty is in a heightened consciousness. This is the meaning of sublimation for Keats. And so Keats finds poetry a pleasure, a passion and a refuge from his worldly sorrows.

"However, I must think that difficulties nerve the spirit of Man—they make our Prime objects a Refuge as well as a Passion" (To Haydon ; May 10, 1817).

"Life must be undergone, and I certainly derive a consolation from the thought of writing one or two more poems before it ceases" (To Bailey, June 10, 1818).

Though the pleasure derived from poetry-writing is partly due to the fame it might bring, yet it is an aesthetic pleasure in the main

which the poet enjoys. This aesthetic pleasure is unique, of its own kind, distinct from intellectual, moral or sensuous pleasure. Sublimating for Keats was not what it is for the modern psycho-analyst ; we may guess that Keats knew what was catharsis, and we may say Keats was purging his hard experiences of life through poetry. He was no 'ivory tower' poet, he loved teeming life with all its rawness, pain and confusion. He loved Shakespeare most, read *Lear's* "the bitter-sweet of this Shakespearean fruit", and felt himself "more at home among men and women." He could not be a formalist, however abstractly we may interpret his 'principle of Beauty in all things' and his 'mighty abstract idea of Beauty'. Art was a matter of content for him, he moved from romance to drama consciously, from dreams to life's actualities.

Form for Keats, it may be suggested, was a natural dress which the content evolves. If Keats were to hear our controversy on form and content he might reply, "Take care of the content, the form will come of itself." The very process which transmutes a raw experience of life into a content for beauty, the process of isolation and concentration, gives also a form to it. Beauty is form-content at once.

That Keats was no formalist can be further seen from an examination of his idea about the function of art. Keats did not separate art from life. Art through its content influences an age.

"I find there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing good to the world—some do it with their society, some with their wit. . . there is but one way for me—the road lies through application, study and thought" (To Taylor, April 24, 1818).

Of course, Keats does not want poetry to have 'designs upon us', but he was moving towards greater thought and power to do good, he was recognising Truth and Good more and more as values besides his own Beauty. Early in 'Sleep and Poetry' he wrote accusing the fallen poets for.

"Forgetting the great end
Of poesy, that it should be a friend
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of men."
The poet and the dreamer differ in this that
 "The one pours out balm upon the world
 The other vexes it." (*Hyperion : a dream*).

Poetry has a positive value and ground for existence : it is effectual.

“A drainless shower
Of light is poesy, 'tis the supreme power
'Tis might half-slumbering on its own right arm.”

Thus poetry should not have a '*palpable* design upon us' (italics ours) it should be 'unobtrusive' and 'great', yet it may have a design that is not obvious, the instruction should be well digested by poetic imagination, the net effect should be of beauty. Keats was not for any cheap compromise of the sort as Sydney or Dryden were tempted to make in such a phrase as 'delightful teaching'; poetry should be pure, but it is exactly pure poetry which will work for human good. This poetry, therefore, must have a content. Keats gave importance to the subject; poetry should startle us with its subject and not with itself. This is what Mathew Arnold stressed in his essay, "Subjects for poetry" and what Hegel meant when he advised that the artist should lose himself in his work, surrender himself to the Idea; through sacrificing his idiosyncrasies he can realise his artistic individuality. This subject can be anything truly felt, and so it may be a thought, if it is not a reasoned thought but simply intuited. "Nothing can become real till it is experienced," Keats writes in one letter; and in another, "axioms of philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses." When he cries, "O for a life of sensations rather than of thought," he speaks against dry reasoning, not against thought that is 'experienced' by an artist. Such thought forms the content of some of the Odes of Keats. Keats was not for bodiless poetry. Content was for him the soul of poetry.



NATIR PUJA

THE DANCING GIRL'S WORSHIP

A DRAMA BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

ACT THIRD

The Palace Garden

[*Enter MALATI and SRIMATI.*

Malati. Sister, there is no peace for me.

Srimati. What has happened ?

Malati. When they took you away to dress you for your dance, I went over to the wall there and peeped out into the road. They were carrying away Mother Utpalaparna's body, and . . .

Srimati. Come, tell me ; why do you stop ?

Malati. I'm very weak—you won't be angry ?

Srimati. Of course not !

Malati. I saw him walking along by the body, chanting the funeral verses.

Srimati. Whom do you mean ?

Malati. From a distance it looked like—*him*.

Srimati. Yes, it's quite possible.

Malati. I vowed I would never set eyes on him, even from a distance, until I found the Path of *Mukti*.

Srimati. You must keep your vow. You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water. Don't let yourself indulge in vain wishes.

Malati. Don't think I'm beside myself with longing to see him. It's not that. I'm afraid they will kill him ; that's why I want to be with him. O sister, please don't despise me if I cannot keep my vow.

Srimati. Do you think I don't understand your sorrow ?

Malati. I couldn't save him, but at least I could die with him. I can't bear up any longer, sister, everything is over. There will be no freedom for me in this life.

Srimati. You are going to one who can give you freedom, because he himself is free. This talk of yours has helped me to see one thing clearly.

Malati. Why, what is that, sister ?

Srimati. That the old wound in my own heart is still unhealed ; it has begun to ache again. I have got rid of my outward ties, but the more I do so the deeper they hide themselves within.

Malati. It grieves me very much to leave you, sister, for there is no one else in the palace so lonely as you. But go I must. When you have time, please chant for me the text of forgiveness.

Srimati. *O Buddha, do thou forgive me the wrong I have done in thy sight.*

Malati. [*Bowing her head*] *O Buddha, do thou forgive.* Please sing me a song before I go. But today I can't keep my mind on those songs of freedom. Sing me a song of the road.

[*SRIMATI sings*

You have called me to take the road.

I have lagged behind, and how shall I travel it now ?

For night has fallen deep

And the gleam of the path is lost.

Give me an answering call, in the gloom and dark.

Malati. Listen, sister, there is that roar again. They have no mercy, any of them. The Buddha has walked this earth, with such infinite pity, and yet these flames of hell are not put out ! I cannot stay here any longer. Farewell, sister. Call me once more when you find your freedom, give me one last chance.

Srimati. Come, I will go with you to the gate.

[*They go out. Enter RATNAVALI and MALLIKA.*

Ratnavali. Devadatta's followers have killed the Bhikshuni. Why make such a to-do about that ? She was only a farmer's daughter.

Mallika. But she is a Bhikshuni now.

Ratnavali. What difference does that make ? Sacred texts don't alter the blood, do they ?

Mallika. Nowadays a change of creed is far more important than a change of blood.

Ratnavali. O, stop talking like that ! The king in trouble because of a lot of resentful commoners ? I can't tolerate that ! This beggar's creed of yours saps the glory of kingship.

Mallika. There is another reason for their resentment. King

Bimbisara set out to offer worship here, but he still hasn't arrived. The people are getting suspicious.

Ratnavali. Yes, a lot of whispering is going on—I've heard it too. I agree that it is a bad business. But it's the fruit of his own deeds, when all is said and done.

Mallika. How, the fruit of his deeds ?

Ratnavali. King Bimbisara murdered the Vedic religion of his forefathers. Wasn't that an even worse deed than parricide ? The Brahmins have been saying ever since that a day of reckoning would come. The hungry sacrificial flames he quenched must devour him in his turn.

Mallika. Hush, gently ! You know how plunged in gloom the king is, for fear of the curse.

Ratnavali. Whose curse should he fear ?

Mallika. Buddha's. At heart the king fears him very greatly.

Ratnavali. But the Buddha never curses anyone. The one who knows how to curse is Devadatta.

Mallika. That is why he gets such honour. Men cheat the merciful god with empty words, to the vindictive god they give costly offerings.

Ratnavali. A god who cannot strike terror must go hungry, like an old lion whose teeth and claws are gone.

Mallika. However that may be, I tell you this—there will certainly be worship at the *asoka* tree this evening.

Ratnavali. Well, we shall see ; but I tell you this too—there will be dancing at the shrine first.

[*MALLIKA goes out. VASAVI enters.*]

Vasavi. I've come prepared.

Ratnavali. For what ?

Vasavi. To have my revenge. That dancing-girl has put me to shame too often.

Ratnavali. How has she done that ? By her preachings ?

Vasavi. No, by making me respect her.

Ratnavali. Is that why you have that knife in your hand ?

Vasavi. No, not for that. But it looks as though there may be a riot, and if it comes to the worst I won't die without a blow.

Ratnavali. Then how do you propose to have your revenge on the dancing-girl ?

Vasavi. [*Showing a necklace*] By means of this necklace.

Ratnavali. Your diamond chain ?

Vasavi. Yes, a costly insult—fit for a kingly house. I shall fling it at her while she is dancing—this gift of my grace !

Ratnavali. And what if she flings it back at you, in disgrace ? What if she does not take it ?

Vasavi. Then I have this. [*Indicates the knife*]

Ratnavali. Call Queen Lokesvari quickly, she will be delighted with this.

Vasavi. I went to look for her on my way here, but they say she has shut herself in her room. Whether she is afraid of revolution, or sulking over her husband, there is no telling.

Ratnavali. But the Maharani *must* be present at today's performance—The Dancer's Discomfiture !

Vasavi. The Dancer's Discomfiture !—a good title that.

[*MALLIKA enters hurriedly.*

Mallika. Things have gone just as I thought. King Ajatasatru has sent out messengers to summon every disciple of the Buddha in the kingdom. Some planet or other must always be propitiated—if not Saturn, then the Sun.

Ratnavali. Excellent ! Then he can hand over the whole lot to Devadatta's disciples. They will make short work of them.

Mallika. No, that's not it. They are to chant the text of purification night and day on his behalf. The king has completely collapsed.

Vasavi. Why, what has happened ?

Mallika. Do you mean to say you have't heard what the people are saying ? Everyone thinks that King Bimbisara has been murdered on the road.

Vasavi. How terrible ! It can't be true.

Mallika. One thing is certain, though ; the king's mind is in torment—on fire with some terrible remorse.

Vasavi. Alas, alas, what dreadful news !

Ratnavali. Has the Maharani Lokesvari been told ?

Mallika. No one dares to tell her ; anyone who brought such evil news would be torn to pieces.

Vasavi. This is a terrible disaster. No one in the palace will

escape the consequences of such a crime. Can Dharma be so lightly broken with impunity ?

Ratnavali. There you go again, Vasavi !—inclined to become the dancing-girl's disciple after all. People hide behind this folly called religion only when they are cowed by fear.

Vasavi. Never ! I tell you I fear nothing. I'm going to tell Bhadra the news.

Ratnavali. That's just an excuse for running away. You *are* afraid. This cowardice of yours makes me heartily ashamed. This is what comes of keeping such low company.

Vasavi. That's not fair ; I'm not afraid.

Ratnavali. Very well then ; in that case come and see the dance under the *asoka* tree.

Vasavi. Why not ? Do you think you have to force me to go ?

Ratnavali. We will wait no longer, Mallika. Call Srimati at once, whether she is dressed or not. If the other princesses don't want to come, we must have all the waiting-maids there, or the fun will be spoiled.

Vasavi. Here is Srimati coming now. Just look at her, she is like one walking in a dream—like a shining noonday mirage. She is rapt out of herself completely.

[SRIMATI *enters slowly, singing.*

O Thou Life supernal,
O Thou Death supreme,
Refuge I take in Thee.
Light my dark lamp at Thy fire
Print Thy glory on my brow,
Take away my shame.

Ratnavali. This way, girl. Can't she hear what we say ? Here you, this way !

[SRIMATI *continues.*

Thy feet the touchstone are
To change my dross to gold,
Refuge I take in Thee.

The tarnished cleanse, the dark illumine ;
 May all my evil turn to good.
 Rend all veils for ever.

Ratnavali. Why are you standing still, Vasavi ? Come on !

Vasavi. No, I will not.

Ratnavali. Why not ?

Vasavi. To tell you the truth, I cannot.

Ratnavali. Are you afraid ?

Vasavi. Yes, I am afraid.

Ratnavali. Aren't you ashamed ?

Vasavi. Not in the least. Srimati, that text of forgiveness, please.

Srimati. *I bow to the precious dust of thy feet. O Buddha, do thou forgive the wrongs I have done in thy sight.*

Vasavi. *O Buddha, do thou forgive ! O Buddha, do thou forgive !*

[SRIMATI sings. All go out. Bhikshus enter in procession singing.

ACT FOURTH

Under the asoka tree. The broken stupa.

[RATNAVALI enters with some maids-in-waiting, and some women guards.

First Maid. Princess, it is getting late ; we have our work in the palace.

Ratnavali. Wait a little longer. Queen Lokesvari herself wants to be present. The dance cannot begin until she comes.

Second Maid. We have come at your command, but this sacrilege—it makes us frightened and uneasy.

Third Maid. To see a dancing-girl dance here—here where we have worshipped the Lord ? Fie on such sin—how could it ever be washed away ?

Fourth Maid. We never dreamed that such a hateful thing could happen here. No, no, we cannot stay, we cannot.

Ratnavali. O you wretches !—don't you know that the worship of Buddha has been forbidden ?

Fourth Maid. To defy the king is beyond our power. We don't worship the Lord ; but all the same we can't insult Him.

First Maid. The palace dancing-girl dances only for the royal family. Why should we have any hand in all this? Come along, all of you, let us go back to where we belong.

Ratnavali. (*To a guard*) Don't let them go. (*To another*) Call that dancing-girl here quickly.

First Maid. Princess, this sin will not touch the dancing-girl. It is on your own head alone.

Ratnavali. Do you think I care for the new-fangled sins of your upstart religion?

Second Maid. To insult what men hold sacred has always been a sin.

Ratnavali. This pious dancing-girl seems to have infected you all. You can't scare me with your talk of sin—I'm not a child.

First Guard. (*To First Maid*) Vasumati, we all revered Srimati. But it seems we were mistaken. She herself has agreed to dance.

Ratnavali. Agreed! Of course she has! Would she not fear to disobey the king?

First Guard. It is for such as we to fear the king, but . . .

Ratnavali. Do you think a dancing-girl ranks above you?

First Maid. We never thought of her as a dancing-girl. We saw in her the light of heaven.

Ratnavali. A dancing-girl has to dance, even in heaven itself.

First Guard. How I used to dread lest an order should come from the king, and I should have to lay hands on Srimati! I'm ready enough to do it now, without waiting for orders.

First Maid. Never mind about *her*, the wicked wretch. What about ourselves? Where shall *we* be if we pollute our eyes with this sinful sight?

Ratnavali. Hasn't that dancing-girl finished dressing yet? Fancy! How much this dancer-saint of yours enjoys dressing up!

First Maid. Here she comes. Whew, how she sparkles!

Second Maid. That sinful body of hers is aflame with a hundred light.

[SRIMATI enters, dressed for her dance.

First Maid. You are a wicked woman, Srimati. Shameless girl, will you dare dance before the Lord's own seat? I wonder your legs have not been blasted into dry sticks already.

Srimati. I have no choice. The command is laid upon me.

Second Maid. I'll tell you this much—you'll be dancing a million years on the burning coals of hell.

Third Maid. Look at her ! The debased creature has covered herself from head to foot with bracelets and bangles. They'll be chains of fire to eat through flesh and bone ; they'll be streams of torment in every vein. Do you realise that ?

[*MALLIKA enters hurriedly and speaks aside to RATNAVALI.*

Mallika. The king has countermanded his order. The Buddha worship is no longer forbidden. They are proclaiming it in the street now with beat of drum. They may be here at any moment. And that's not all—King Ajatasatru himself is preparing to come and offer worship here.

Ratnavali. Then run, Mallika, and get Queen Lokesvari here at once.

Mallika. Here she comes now.

[*LOKESVARI enters.*

Ratnavali. This is your seat, Maharani.

Lokesvari. Wait a moment. I must have a word in private with Srimati. [*Calling her aside*] Srimati !

Srimati. What is it, Maharani ?

Lokesvari. Take this, I brought it for you.

Srimati. What is it ?

Lokesvari. The nectar of heaven.

Srimati. I don't understand.

Lokesvari. It is poison ; drink it and save yourself.

Srimati. Do you think that there is no other way of salvation ?

Lokesvari. There is none. Ratnavali has already been to the king and got his orders for you to dance. There is not the slightest hope that the order will be revoked.

Ratnavali. Maharani, the time is short. Let the dance begin.

Lokesvari. Take it and drink, quick ! Die here, and you go to heaven. Dance here, and you go to lowest hell.

Srimati. Before everything, I will keep the commandment.

Lokesvari. What, you will dance ?

Srimati. Yes, I shall dance.

Lokesvari. And you are not afraid ?

Srimati. No, not in the least.

Lokesvari. Then no one can save you.

Srimati. None but the Saviour ; He will deliver.

Ratnavali. Maharani, there's not a minute to be lost. Don't you hear the tumult outside ? The rebels may be in the garden at any moment. Dancing-girl, begin your dance.

[*SRIMATI sings as she dances.*

Forgive, O Lord, forgive me,
Accept my reverence.
O Peerless One, I think of Thee,
And my full heart overflows
In the pulsing life of dance.
To Thee I raise
In wordless praise
My eager body's rhythm'd cry—
This new birth's eloquence.
In music and in gesture shines
My worship, Lord, of Thee.

Ratnavali. What kind of a dance is this ? Nothing but a pretence ! And what's the meaning of this song ?

Lokesvari. No, no, don't stop her.

Srimati [*Continuing.*

Lo, all my being's ecstasy,
That trembles into pain !
On the ocean of peace there dance the waves,
And beauty awakes again.
All I have suffered and striven,
Let it not shamèd be.
In music and in gesture shines
My worship, Lord, of Thee.

Ratnavali. What is all this ? She throws her jewels, one by one, upon the stupa ruins. There go her bracelets, her necklace ! The jewels belong to the palace, Maharani—what an insult ! *Srimati*, those ornaments are mine—my own ; go and pick them up at once and bring them here, and then touch them with your forehead.

Lokesvari. Peace ! Peace ! She is not to blame ; the rhythm of her song demands it. It has set my own body trembling with

ecstasy too. (*She unclasps her necklace and throws it before the stupa*)
Don't stop, Srimati ; go on, go on !

Srimati [*Continuing.*

I bring no woodland flower,
No fruit for worship meet.
No jar of holy water
To offer at Thy feet.
But into my slender body poured
The streams of my heart are free.
In music and in gesture shines
My worship, Lord, of Thee.

Ratnavali. This is a mere mockery of dancing ! See her throw off her dancing robes, one by one ! Look, Maharani, the yellow Bhikshuni's cloth underneath. This is worship, surely. Don't you see her, guards ? Don't you remember what punishment the king has ordered ?

Guard. But Srimati has chanted no holy text.

Srimati. [*Kneeling*] *My refuge is in the Buddha*

Guard. [*Placing her hand over SRIMATI's mouth*] Stop, stop, foolhardy girl ! Stop before it is too late.

Ratnavali. Carry out the king's orders !

Srimati. *My refuge is in the Buddha, My refuge is in the Dhamma*

Maids. O Srimati, stop, don't bring us all into disaster.

Guard. Don't walk into the jaws of death, crazy woman !

Second Guard. I implore and entreat you, for pity's sake, be silent.

Maids. I can't bear the sight of it, I can't bear it. Let us get away from here ! [*They all flee.*

Ratnavali. Carry out the king's orders !

Srimati. *My refuge is in the Buddha ! My refuge is in the Dhamma ! My refuge is in the Sangha !*

Lokesvari. [*Kneeling*] *My refuge is in the Buddha ! My refuge is in the Dhamma ! My refuge is in the Sangha !*

[*The guard strikes SRIMATI, who falls dead across the holy seat.*

Guards. Forgive us, forgive us.

[*As they speak they come one by one and take the dust of SRIMATI's feet.*

Lokesvari. [*Taking Srimati's head in her lap*] Dancing-girl, this Bhikshuni's robe shall be your parting gift to me. [*She bows her head and touches it with reverence*] Let it be mine.

[*RATNAVALI has sunk down on the ground.*

Mallika. What are you thinking of ?

Ratnavali. Now at last I am afraid.

[*An attendant enters.*

Attendant. King Ajatasatru has come to worship the Lord. He waits at the gate and asks the ladies' leave to enter.

Mallika. I will go and bid him enter in your name.

[*She goes out.*

Lokesvari. All of you chant after me, *My refuge is in the Buddha !*
All except Ratnavali. My refuge is in the Buddha !

Lokesvari. [*Followed by the rest.*

My refuge is in the Dhamma !

My refuge is in the Sangha !

The Buddha is my supreme refuge, I have no other !

By this truth may blessing and wellbeing be mine !

[*MALLIKA enters.*

Mallika. The king has not entered, he has turned back.

Lokesvari. Why ?

Mallika. When he heard what has happened, he trembled in fear.

Lokesvari. Fear ? Of whom ?

Mallika. Of that dead dancing-girl.

Lokesvari. Come, let us bring a palanquin ; we must all carry this body.

Ratnavali. [*Taking the dust of SRIMATI'S feet and kneeling in reverence.*

My refuge is in the Buddha ! My refuge is in the Dhamma ! My refuge is in the Sangha !



SUMMER-NOON

V. Masojd

REMINISCENCES OF AN ARTIST

SOUTH VERANDAH : THE LAST PHASE

By ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

..... MOTHER's time came and she left us for good. Then the call came for Dada, the eldest of us three, and he went away too.

The crowd began to melt away till there were no familiar faces to be seen in our South Verandah. Nor were heard any more the old familiar voices.

Myself was the only one left in that vast solitude — a lonely figure contemplating the ruin of all hopes, unable to shake off the burden of memory. Brother, friends, companions, pupils who used to come there in daily round—all had gone. And in the empty verandah I was left alone—to make toys, to tinker with dry twigs and broken wires—the only diversion left in a drab existence.

Into that life came Phelabati. She came from nowhere. A speck of child-humanity with no claims to attention.

“Who may you be,” I asked.

“I am Phela,” she answered.

Only that and nothing more.

“Oh, are you ? You are welcome, my girl.”

My welcome was sincere . I was glad. When I am playing with thrown-away things, then comes my Phelabati—the rejected one.*

“But where are you from, Phelabati ? Where do you live ?”

“Over there—”

And her finger pointed to the crossing of the lane at no great distance.

“And whom have you got at home, Phela ?”

“There's my mother. Her name is Kaumudi.”

“And your father's—”

“Basanta.”

I was wondering whether this little neighbour of mine was a real fragment of humanity or—a phantom.

“What may you be wanting here, Phela ?” I asked uncertainly.

“Might I play in the verandah for a while ?”

* *Phela* literally means “thrown-away.”

"Why not?"

She chose her corner and began playing with broken trifles—like myself.

"Will you have some sweets, Phela?" I ask by and by.

She nods assent. Radhu the maid turns up her nose but she brings the sweets nonetheless and some water in an earthen cup.

Phela eats the sweets, drinks the water and places the empty cup in a corner with gentle care and then resumes her play.

"How did you like the *sandesh*, Phela?"

"Your sweets are a bit sticky. What my mother gives me are much better—dry and crusty."

And that is that.

She comes daily. I offer her sweets and try to run up an intimacy. She sits in her own corner and I in mine and we both play—with thrown-away trifles. I make toys out of them which fill the small cabinet by my side.

"Shall I dust them for you?" She asked one day.

She began dusting them every day and would caress them as if they were her living playmates.

"Would you like to have one of these, Phela?"

"No, what shall I do with them?"—was her indifferent reply. "I would rather have those small stone pebbles."

"Yes ———."

"For my brother to play marbles with." She added promptly.

She would sometimes ask for old newspapers for her father to make paper-bags with for the shop-keepers and occasionally small empty tins for her mother to keep spices in.

Thus she came every day and I got used to her coming. She would approach with stealthy steps dropping from where I never knew.

I only knew she was the playmate of my lonely days. And I was content. She came unbidden, offered herself and asked for nothing in return. She was indeed Phela—a speck of being carelessly thrown into the world, ignored by all, rejected like the broken toys and the torn paper we were playing with. We gathered those trifles and played together—I, an old man and she, a child—in that South Verandah of ours.

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She expressed a desire one day to see the inner apartments of the house.

"Would you have them shown to me?" she asked hesitatingly.

Radhu the maid took her to Parul my daughter-in-law who showed her round and feasted her well.

She had a good look-in. Saw everything with minute care, I was told.

That was her last entry in the South Verandah. And mine too.

I took to bed after that. And in my sick-bed I heard that the house with its South Verandah, laden with the memory of generations, had passed into the hands of Marwaris. I, being an invalid, had been allowed to stay on for a month longer !

[*An extract from JORASANKOR DHAREY translated into English by Kanti Ghosh.*]



DRUMS

By EVELYN WOOD

*Drums in the Polynesian distance
stir the leaves in that scented calm
fill the forest with thrilled insistence
nourish desire in the groves of palm.*

Drums in the wild Afridi gorges
pound at the tribesman's iron breast,
heat the steel in the hidden forges,
blood-feuds beating—admit no rest.

Drums in the dead sophistication :
London grill-rooms at gaudy night—
press through saxophones' ululation,
drowning danger and hiding fright.

Tympani thunder, side-drums rattle,
tomtoms mutter—all strike one note :
Action ! plunge into love or battle—
limbs of desire or the enemy's throat.

Be it rawhide, goatskin, parchment
or a hollow log of wood
when the rhythm is reverberating
pulses hammer blood
into savage war or mating,
violent lust, voluptuous hating ;
true sensation, reason's error,
silent kisses, yelling terror,
egotistic love, like rape . . .
immolation or escape
throbbing in the blood
while the thunders in the drumheads shape
the human clot of mud . . .

Tropical wireless, fixed *lokali*,
slung *mridanga* of Manipur
wake the *juju* or summon Kali,
tuning the murmuring mob to endure.

Drums on the brain !—the tragicomic
rape of the Virgin Intellect ;
Science betrayed by subatomic
force, has littered a power unchecked.

Funeral drums ! Bury the hatchet
deep as our hope of a brave new world ;
the old may last us *if* we can patch it
before our race to the discard's hand.

Deafening ears and drowning voices,
drums in their rising thunder hide
little wisdom which Man rejoices—
Europe plunges to suicide.

*Drums in the Polynesian distance,
pulse of the giant fern and palm,
fill the leaves with their sap's insistence,
stir the forest's maternal calm.*



REVIEWS

THE MIND OF MAHATMA GANDHI: Compiled by R. K. Prabhu
and U. R. Rao. With a Foreword by Sir S. Radhakrishnan.
Oxford University Press. Price, Rs. 3/-.

THIS is a collection of extracts from Gandhiji's writings and speeches, classified under different headings for easy reference and strung together so as to make it possible for the reader to gain an insight into the mind of a man whose outlook and way of life are influencing the minds and lives of millions of other men. But while millions feel this influence, very few have any clear idea of the way that the mind of Gandhiji works or what he has actually said of the problems that face us. His writings are spread over the pages of various journals and are outside the reach of an average reader. Though the Navajivan Press of Ahmedabad and Shri Anand Hingorani of Karachi have published several excellent volumes of Gandhiji's writings, they deal with specific aspects of Gandhiji's thought and are more useful to the serious student than to the lay reader. For the latter the book under review serves the purpose best. It is handy, not too expensive, beautifully printed, admirably got up and within its limits fairly comprehensive. It is a book which should be constantly on one's table or by one's bed to dip into at leisure. To many it will have the value of a new Bible or a new Gita; for here are words that have come out from the depth of truth, here is tireless striving that stretches its arms towards perfection. We congratulate the editors and the publishers on this excellent publication.

K. K.

OVER THERE: Suresh Vaidya. Hind Kitabs, Bombay. Rs. 2/8-.
THE FUTURE OF INDIA: Penderel Moon. Target for Tomorrow Series, 5sh.

SURESH VAIDYA has provided in handy form a résumé of the human, military and diplomatic aspects of the war from the point of view of an Indian resident in Britain. He has very largely succeeded in his aim of objectivity, and he is to be congratulated on the lucidity of his analysis and the cogent vigour of his style. A picture such as this ought to be of great value to the Indian student in helping him to understand the history of the world during his own boyhood.

But the Indian, student or no, will naturally turn with the greatest interest to the later chapters on India's part in the war and its bearing on her future, and as he does so he will find Mr. Moon's analysis of the Indian situation a most valuable complementary study. Both writers emphasize the immense significance of India to the future of Asia and of the world; both are convinced that—in Mr. Moon's words—"British rule is now essentially sterile", and that political objectives *must* therefore take precedence because no other reform, however urgent, *can* be carried out without them.

Mr. Moon's word, as that of an Englishman with Indian Government experience, will carry weight with that freedom-loving British people to whose

honesty of purpose Mr. Vaidya pays tribute, though he analyses much more clearly than Mr. Moon the economic obstacles in the way of the utilisation of India's sterling balances to meet her own real needs. In other points too the two writers supplement each other. Mr. Vaidya stresses the need of a strenuous campaign to put India's point of view before the world ; but the content of this campaign should be *constructive*—e. g. Mr. Vaidya's condemnation of the "secret diplomacy" of the Cripps Mission may be merited, but is now barren ; what is needed is persistently to remind the conscience of the British people of their commitment to the Cripps pledge of complete independence immediately after the war—that is to say, NOW.

Not everyone will agree with Mr. Moon's conclusions with regard to the Hindu-Muslim problem ; nor regard with the same complacency as he apparently does the prospect that in India as elsewhere "an age of faith will give place to an age of reason", i. e. of purely materialist values ; but he deserves at least a careful and unprejudiced hearing

M. S.

THE PEACOCK LUTE : Edited by V. N. Bhushan.

Padma Publications Ltd. Bombay. Price, Rs. 6/-.

THIS is an anthology of poems in English by Indian writers. Mr. Bhushan has taken considerable pains to make it as representative as possible, but the result, it is feared, has not been commensurate with the trouble involved. Something more than mere enthusiasm would seem to be required to make an anthology authoritative or even presentable. An editor with a little less enthusiasm and a little more acumen would have restricted his selections to the best pieces of the more representative poets only. He would also have resisted the temptation of including translated pieces in an anthology of this kind. Mr. Bhushan would have been better advised if he had kept closely to the track of the late Mr. Dunn. The editor's general introduction is interesting but one can't help feeling that it would have had a better chance of appreciation if it were less verbose and suggestive rather than argumentative in its presentation. The biographical notes, too, should have been shorter and more to the point. And this particularly applies to the poet-editor's note on himself much of which might have been gracefully left out. The get-up too could well have been less bizarre.

Soma Varma.

A NATIONAL THEATRE FOR INDIA : By Baldoon Dhingra.

Padma Publications Ltd. Bombay. 54 pp. Rs. 2/-.

THIS small book is a passionate plea for rearing up in India a theatre of the people, for the people and by the people, a non-commercial theatre owned by the community, a really national theatre for social service and without acquisitive gain.

Prof. Dhingra thinks that, even against the background of present-day objective conditions in India, it is a practical proposition, and shows that it is so by working out the major organisational and administrative details, and by offering constructive suggestions. He does not forget our own puppet and village theatres or children's theatre, nor does he fail to discuss the modern experiments made in several places in India in open-air theatres. These are all brought within the orbit of his scheme and given a new focus. The book is well-worth perusal, and Prof. Dhingra has earned our gratitude by drawing our attention to a subject which is indeed of national importance.

Niharranjan Ray.

FRENCH STORIES FROM ALPHONSE DAUDET: by Indira Sarkar.

With An Introduction by Prof. Olivier Lacombe.

Chuckervetty Chatterjee & Co., Ltd., Calcutta. Rs. 4/-.

THE translator of this selection of short stories by Daudet is to be congratulated on having made accessible to the Indian reading public the work of one of the great 19th century French writers. Alphonse Daudet had hardly been known before in the East. This is partly due to his regional appeal, most of his stories dealing with the South of France. As a humorist, however, there are very few, even in France, who surpass him in sympathetic wit and mirth.

Daudet's regionalism should, however, be no obstacle to an understanding and appreciation of his work. Just as Thomas Hardy's *Wessex* novels transcend the narrow confines of a district in England, so do the tales of Daudet go beyond the idiosyncrasies of a particular province of France. The South of France has indeed given France most of her great writers, politicians, and philosophers. It is only fair that Indian readers should become acquainted with that aspect of French literature which is as important for an understanding of French culture as Irish literature is for an understanding of English culture.

The translation suffers at times from over-literality which could easily have been avoided.

A. A.

21 *SHORT STORIES*. International Series No. 3. International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Rs. 3/8.

THIS volume of short stories will, we are sure, be welcomed by Indian readers. As a selection or anthology it is, however, not always convincing. The East is represented by a single story from the pen of a comparatively unknown Indian writer, while short stories from the Chinese, for instance, are conspicuously absent. On the other hand, stories from western writers have been included which, because of their obvious inferiority, seem to be out of place in an

"international" series. However, we are glad to find stories by such eminent writers as Tchekoff, E. A. Poe, Pierre Loti, Knut Hamsun, and Dickens. In contrast with these stories, the rest seem to be singularly pale and unconvincing. This volume has undoubtedly achieved great entertainment value; but the reader who, apart from entertainment, also expects that aesthetic pleasure which comes from great literature, will not always be satisfied. The get-up of the book is excellent.

A. A.

BEST STORIES OF MODERN BENGAL : Volume Two.

The Signet Press, Calcutta. Price, Rs. 6/12/-.

THOSE who enjoyed the first volume looked forward to this one. Between them the two volumes give the non-Bengali reader an intimate glimpse into the many facets of Bengali life and character. In the creative arts, at least, Bengal still leads the rest of India. These two volumes give a fair idea of the achievement of Young Bengal in the art of short-story writing, which is so popular today. The editors have exercised their choice generously and judiciously and have not neglected the younger and less-known writers. The translator has done her job well. Even the fastidious reader will find at least some stories worth reading, which is high praise for any anthology. The printing, paper and the binding are excellent. The general excellence of the publication is somewhat marred by too many printer's-devils and by the rather commonplace character of the drawings. We mention these defects, which we ordinarily overlook in other Indian publications, simply because the Signet Press have otherwise set a very high standard.

K. K.

COMMUNAL SETTLEMENT : By Beni Prasad.

Hind Kitabs, Bombay. Price, As. 14/-

IN this well-written pamphlet Dr. Beni Prasad analyses critically the Pakistan issue and after taking into consideration the relevant facts shows that the option before political India is not between "union" and "independence"; rather the alternative is either "union plus independence" or "disunion plus dependence". Citing various examples of the federal trend he shows that the best interests of India will be served only by accepting a federal constitution. A separatist outlook will lead either to civil war or strengthen the forces of reaction. It is to be hoped that this useful pamphlet will receive the widest publicity.

K. P. Mukerji.

EXAMINATIONS IN INDIA : by D. N. Mukherji.

Hind Kitabs, Bombay. Price As. 12/-

ALL progressive educational thinkers, both western and Indian, have denounced in one voice the prevailing examination system, which, in their opinion, has assumed a place of prestige out of all proportion to its utility. Within the

limited space at his disposal the writer sums up the situation with admirable point and thoroughness, showing judgment and a sense of proportion in his choice of extracts from the writings and suggestions of great educationists and famous educational Commissions.

"Trust the Schools" is the solution of course, but the problem is how to bring the schools up to a dependable standard of efficiency. Most Universities all over the world insist on having their own admission examinations. The reason is obvious. If higher education is to maintain its quality, it cannot but claim control over the machinery of selection. How far should then the Universities be allowed to meddle with High School administration? When our education comes to be better organised, the schools must necessarily be placed under the control of a Board. What then should be the relation between that Board and the Universities concerned? This is of course a problem of organisation, but unless and until this is solved there is no chance of eradicating or improving the pernicious examination system. But in any case it is difficult to see why no attempt has so far been made by our Universities to improve the technique of their examinations on the basis of recent researches, unless of course it is due to characteristic moral lethargy and want of imagination.

This small book excellently serves its purpose and should be read by all who want to think clearly on the subject.

S. C. SARCAR.

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ AND THE BATTLE FOR SWARAJ IN INDIA :

By Bipin Chandra Pal. New edition. Published by the Sadharan

Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta. pp. 54. Re 1/-

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ movement, in a form entirely spiritual, the first freedom movement of modern India, was started over a hundred years ago by Raja Ram Mohun Roy. In the wake of it came other movements for freedom in other walks of life, initiated by the same great man. It fell dormant however after his untimely death and remained so till, revived by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, it had a rapid growth, and in its fullness, through the labours of many an illustrious follower of his, culminated in the establishment of the different sections of the Brahmo Samaj. The spirit of freedom is one whatever the field. The leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, actuated by this spirit, came to the forefront also in social reform and political struggles.

The author, the late Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, was a great orator, erudite and fearless, and one of the first few to be incarcerated for political activities. In this small book it has been pointed out that the Vaidic term 'Swaraj', first used in political language by the late Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of our youth, decades ago, is spiritual in its meaning, and that 'it is impossible to separate the movement of the Brahmo Samaj from the general freedom movement.'

The book gives within its narrow space many eloquent facts and also parallels drawn from several sources, and is decidedly profitable reading.

J. C.

CHHANDOGURU RABINDRANATH : By Prabodh-Chandra Sen.

Published by Visva-Bharati, Calcutta. Price, Rs. 2/8/-.

ABOUT twenty-three years ago the Bengali monthly, *Prabasi*, published a series of articles by Mr. Prabodh-Chandra Sen (then an undergraduate) on Metrics in Bengali Poetry which created quite a sensation in literary circles in Bengal. It was felt that a remarkable talent had come to the field of Bengali Prosody. Ever since then, the writer of those articles gave evidence of continuing his studies on the subject, reading much, writing not so much, and thinking a lot more, till at last when the patience of an admiring public had very nearly reached its limit, he has come out with a book on Rabindranath's prosody containing his final reflections and observations on the subject. It is but fitting that the first really scientific prosodist of Bengali poetry should analyse the versification of the poet who by his great revolutionary achievements made a scientific analysis of Bengali metrics possible.

Before Tagore, Bengali prosody could not be said to be based on any consciously scientific principle. Even the two outstanding poets before him, Bharatchandra Ray (1712-1760) and Micheal Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) who contributed so richly to Bengali prosody, based their verses on a defective principle arising out of the amphibious character of the Bengali script which is neither wholly syllabic like, say, the ancient *Brāhmī*, nor wholly alphabetical as the Roman script. Thus a kind of pseudo-syllabic form of versification held the ground till Tagore effected a revolution in Bengali versification and established it on the principle of quantitative equivalence based on the unit of sound and not on the number of written or printed characters of the alphabet. Prof. Sen gives internal evidence from Rabindranath's early poetry of the struggle between tradition and individual genius that characterises his versification in his younger days till in the *Mānasī*, his genius established itself and laid the foundations of a scientific system of prosody.

But the achievement of Prof. Sen is not so much in his tracing of the conflict and its resolution as revealed in the Poet's early versification as in the classification he has effected of different metres which, since Tagore and thanks to Tagore, have firmly established themselves in Bengali poetry. The greatest achievement which entitles Prof. Sen to the position of the first and the most prominent scientific prosodist of his time in Bengali poetry lies in this principle of classification of Bengali metres and a full exposition of their characters and characteristics.

In the light of this classification the author analyses Tagore's versification in all its details, explores the secret springs of its beauty and power and discusses the laws that lie at its root. Though it deals with a technical subject, this book, by virtue of the author's most fascinating style and exceptionally lucid exposition, will satisfy even lay readers who may read it with pleasure and profit. It is a matter of deep gratification that Bengali literature can now boast of at least one standard book on Tagore's prosody.

Binayendramohan Chaudhuri.

MUDRĀ-RĀKSASA (The Signet Ring) of Viśākha-Datta : A play in seven acts. Translated into English from the original Sanskrit by Ranjit Sitaram Pandit. Published by the New Book Company, Bombay. 1944. pp. XV + 277.

TRANSLATION is a fine art which entails not merely the mastery of two languages but a subtle intuition and skill in the use of words. In the volume under review, the late Mr. R. S. Pandit has done this work wonderfully well. He has been able to retain and bring out successfully the charm and vigour of the lyrical passages in form and matter.

Besides a pretty long but valuable Introductory Note, the book under review has eight chapters dealing with (i) the origin and development of the Sanskrit Drama (ii) History of Pātaliputra (iii) Viśākha-Datta and the age of the Guptas (iv) the Nandas, the Mauryas and Chānakya (v) Iranian, Greek and Chinese contacts with India (vi) Critical Note (vii) Acknowledgement and Bibliography and (viii) Notes. He has delineated in a simple style the history of the foundation of the Maurya Empire which, in our opinion, is very useful for the correct understanding of the intricate plot of this historical drama.

Advanced students of Sanskrit language and literature will be agreeably surprised to find a mass of valuable information scattered throughout this excellent volume, and we know of no other work in English in which all that is essential to know about Viśākha-Datta has been presented within such a short compass and with such perfect clarity as in the Introductory Note and the Post-script of this book.

Nagendranath Chakravarti.

ENGLISH POETS ON INDIA AND OTHER ESSAYS : By Rabindra Kumar Dasgupta. With a Foreword by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty. The Book House, 15 College Square, Calcutta. Rs. 2/-

ALL the essays in this book are worth reading ; those which deal with India in English literature particularly so. Indian students usually read English literature with "English" eyes and repeat parrot-like what English critics have said. It is therefore refreshing to find an author who has measured its value with a different standard, even though that standard is not properly aesthetic or literary. It is good to learn how far English idealists and champions of humanity have turned their eye on the misdeeds of their countrymen in India.

"Contemporary English poets," says the author, "do not appear to receive from the Indian scene even a fraction of their enthusiasm for freedom and democracy. Like the Atlantic Charter their poetry refers only to the West." But such was not always the case. English poets and writers of the 18th century, the so-called age of materialism, showed a far greater sensibility in this respect. Mr. Dasgupta has culled a wealth of quotations to illustrate the contrast. We'll recall only one from Cowper here and leave the reader to look for the rest in the book.

"That thieves at home must hang, but he that puts
Into his over-gorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces escapes."

K. K.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Changing Ideals in Soviet Russia : By K. T. Shah. Pratibha Publications. Re 1/12.
- The Soviet Occupation of Poland : By F. E. The Indo-Polish Library. As 12/-
- America on Poland : By Hon. Alwin Okonski. The Indo-Polish Library. Re 1/4.
- The Hero in Man : By A. E. International Book House, Ltd. Bombay. As 8/-
- The Jaina Religion & Literature, Vol. I : By H. R. Kapadia. As 10/-
- Acyutarāyābhyudaya of Rājanātha Dindima : Edited by A. N. Krishna Aiyangar.
The Adyar Library Series, No. 49. Rs. 3/8/-
- Rāgavibodha of Somnātha : Edited by Pandit S. Subrahmanya Sastri. The
Adyar Library Series No. 48. Rs. 6/-
- The Fundamental Rights of Man : By M. Venkatarangaiya. Hind Kitabs. Rs. 2/-
- To Women : By Amrit Kaur. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.
- The Indian Constitution : By Sir B. L. Mitter. Padma Publications Ltd. Re. 1/-
- Milk Problem : By J. N. Mankad. Padma Publications Ltd. As 8/-
- The Best Food for Man : By Dr. Anna Kingsford, M. D. International
Book House Ltd. As 6/-
- The Ancient Wisdom of Wales : By Jeffrey Williams. The Adyar Library
Series No. 50. Re. 1/4/-
- The Deliverance : By Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. Translated by Dilip Kumar Roy.
Nalanda Publications. Rs. 3/4/-
- Gold and Guns on the Pathan Frontier : By Abdul Quaiyum. Hind Kitabs.
Rs. 3/12/-
- Masaryk's Path & Legacy : By Dr. Edvard Benes. Nalanda Publications. Re. 1/4/-
- Czechoslovak Sokol : Nalanda Publications. As 12/-
- Bishop Grundtvig (Originator of the Folk High School Movement
of Denmark) : By L. S. Kenworthy. Nalanda Publications. As 4/-
- The Scarlet Muse (Anthology of Polish Poems). Nalanda Publications. Rs. 3/4/-
- Stalin-Wells Talk : Vora & Co. Rs. 1/8/-
- The Beggar Problem : By Dr. J. M. Kumarappa. Padma Publications Ltd. Rs. 10/-
- Some Makers of Modern India : By Dr. Amiya Chakravarty.
A. Mukherjee & Co. Calcutta. Re. 1/8/-
- Post-War Educational Reconstruction : By Hansa Mehta. Pratibha
Publications. As 12/-
- Problem of the Aborigines : By J. C. Heyward. 20th Century Publications. As 8/-
- Famine or Plenty : By "Villager". 20th Century Publications. As 10/-
- Regional Planning in Bihar : By K. Ray. 20th Century Publications. As 6/-
- India's Sterling Balances : By "Villager". 20th Century Publications.
- Defeat for Death : By K. A. Abbas. Padmaja Publications. Rs. 2/-
- The Indian Press : By Vishwanath Iyer. Padma Publications. Rs. 2/-
- The Simla Triangle : Ashoka Mehta & Kusum Nair. Padma Publications. Re 1/-
- When I was in Sha Chuan (Short Stories) : By Ting ling. Translated
by Kung Pusheng. Kutub Publishers. Rs. 3/-
- Indian Music : By Prof. D. P. Mukherji. Kutub Publishers. Rs. 5/-

ALL-INDIA RABINDRANATH MEMORIAL FUND

AN APPEAL

It is more than four years since Rabindranath passed away. He is the greatest poet of our country. He had also the practical vision of an earnest worker for the uplift of our down-trodden masses. He conceived culture as a broad and mighty stream which must fertilise and enrich all layers of our social life. Tagore's life-work, the Visva-Bharati, stands for this essential unity of our national life. It is our task to preserve the legacy of Tagore, spread it widely and then to hand it down to future generations. We, who had the proud privilege of being Tagore's contemporaries, must not fail to repay the debt we owe him. For himself Tagore needs no memorial. But it is the duty of our generation to offer our love and gratitude to his memory. With this sense of sacred national duty, the All India Rabindranath Memorial Committee is making collections to perpetuate his memory in a fitting manner.

The Committee intends to raise a fund of Rupees One Crore which will be devoted to the following objects :

(1) To put the Visva-Bharati on a sound financial basis. The Visva-Bharati is a symbol of Tagore's practical vision. The Poet's dream and his unfinished work can be best fulfilled by widening and strengthening the activities of the Visva-Bharati.

(2) To convert into a cultural centre the houses at Jorasanko in Calcutta—the home of the Poet and his ancestors, where Tagore lived and died and which has for three generations served as the cradle of Bengal's cultural, social and political renaissance. These buildings should be preserved as a national memorial.

(3) To make suitable provision for periodical award of prizes in memory of the Poet for literary work of outstanding merit or for original research work in any Indian language.

We earnestly hope that our people, proud of the glorious tradition bequeathed to them by Rabindranath, will contribute freely and generously to "Rabindranath Memorial Fund" opened in memory of our greatest national Poet.

SURES CHANDRA MAJUMDAR
General Secretary

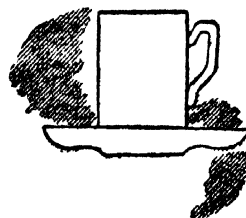
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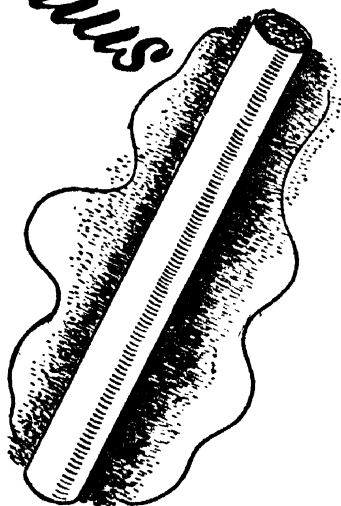
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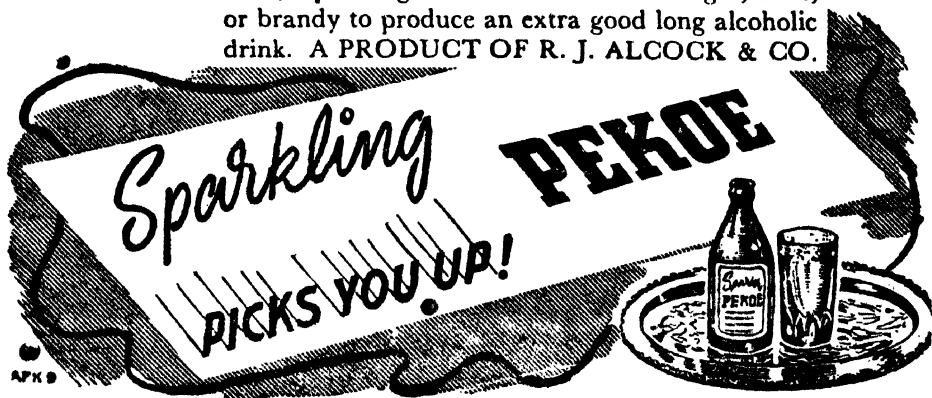


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TOPSY-TURVY EDUCATION

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

[The original Bengali speech (*Sikshār Her-pher*) was first read before the Rajshahi Association in 1892. It was published in *Sādhana* of the same year, and is now included in *Sikshā*, published by Visva-Bharati. The article shows how early in life the author was concerned with problems of Indian education. Though more than half a century has elapsed, the "topsy-turvydom" to which he drew attention still characterises our educational system. The speech has been translated into English by members of the Santiniketan staff.]

It is not in accordance with man's nature that he should be imprisoned within the narrow bounds of the merely necessary. We are indeed bound in some measure by the chains of necessity, but in some measure we are free. Our bodies are three and a half cubits long, but it does not follow that three and a half cubits is sufficient allowance for a house. It is essential that there should be plenty of space for free movement ; the lack of it is detrimental to both health and happiness. The same holds good of education too. When children are confined exclusively to instruction in the merely necessary, their minds cannot grow to their proper stature. If free reading is not intermingled with the indispensable information, the child cannot grow into a fully mature man—he may be mature in years, but he remains very largely a boy in mind.

But unfortunately we have so little time. We must learn a foreign language as quickly as we can, pass our examinations, and get ourselves a job. And consequently from infancy onwards we have no time at all to do anything except get these lessons by heart in a breathless, headlong rush, without so much as a glance to right or left. And so if ever a child is caught reading a book for pure enjoyment, it must immediately be snatched away.

For that matter, where is he to get hold of enjoyable books ? There are no such in Bengali. True, there are the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, but Bengali is not taught to children in such a way that they can sit down at home by themselves and enjoy the real flavour of any Bengali poetry. Nor do they know enough English, poor things, to feel at home with English children's books. Children's literature in English is so idiomatic, so full of references to intimate home life, that even B. A.'s and M. A.'s do not always find it entirely within their reach.

Thus has Fate decreed, as the portion of the Bengali child, nothing but the Grammar, the Dictionary, and the Geography text book. Poor Bengali child, there is surely no one so unfortunate as he ! At an age when children of other lands are happily munching sugarcane with their newly-cut teeth, the Bengali child is seated on a school bench, his thin, stunted legs dangling from the pleats of his *dhoti*, and treated only to that other cane, with no more tasty accompaniment than the master's harsh abuse.

The result of this system is that the power of digestion in every sphere of life is weakened. The bodies of these sons of Bengal remain undeveloped for lack of sufficient games and wholesome food, while the intellectual digestive apparatus is equally unable to come to maturity. We pass our B.A. and M.A. examinations, we cram ourselves with piles and piles of books, but the intellect is not properly strengthened or matured. We are unable to get a really firm grasp of anything, unable to carry through any building to full completion, unable to make anything stand with real strength. Our opinions, our discourse, and our conduct in general are not those of fully mature persons. For that reason we try to hide our mental poverty under cover of exaggeration, bombast and swagger.

The primary cause of all this is that from childhood on there is no joy in our education. We commit to memory only what is indispensably necessary. In such conditions we may manage to get along somehow, but there can be no expansion, no blossoming of our powers. We cannot *live* on air, it is true—our stomachs must have food to fill them ; but to digest the food properly we must take the air. In the same way, for the proper digestion of a text book we need the free air of wide reading. As we go on reading for pleasure, our powers of reading are imperceptibly increased. Our powers of understanding, assimilation and reflection, are easily and naturally stimulated.

But how is the Bengalee to escape the clutches of this joyless education which is sapping his mental energy ? The answer is not easy to find.

In the first place, English is a completely alien tongue. Its rules of syntax and composition have nothing in common with those of our language, and its association of ideas and choice of themes are equally foreign. Everything about it is strange, and consequently we

begin to learn by heart before we can grasp the meaning. This has the same result as swallowing one's food without chewing it. There may, for example, be a story about hay-making in one of the primary readers; the English child is familiar with hay-making and therefore thoroughly enjoys the story. And it may well be that a story of how Charlie and Katie quarrelled when they were playing with snowballs would be immensely interesting to an English child. But when our children read about such things in a foreign language, no memories are stirred and no pictures brought before the mind's eye—they have to grope in the dark from start to finish.

Again, the masters who teach the lower classes may or may not have passed the Entrance examination, but they have never become familiar with the English language, nor with English thought, manners and customs, or literature. It is these men who first introduce us to English. They don't know Bengali properly, they don't know English properly. They have only one advantage—they find it much easier to make the child forget than to make him learn; in that they are completely successful.

We ought not to blame the poor things. Try translating "The horse is a noble animal" into Bengali! It will not be good Bengali and it will confuse the English for us in addition. How can the idea be expressed? Try all sorts of Bengali equivalents for "noble"; none is in the least satisfactory, and the only way out is to cut the Gordian knot. There is no end of such knot-cutting in our first lessons. Indeed, the little English that we learn in our early years is so meagre and so incorrect that it is impossible for boys to derive any pleasure from it. No one expects them to do so. Master and pupil alike, they cry: "Pleasure? What have we to do with pleasure? If we can somehow stretch and twist a meaning out of the stuff, we'll be all right this time—pass the examination, get a job." The "meaning" that usually emerges from this treatment yields, as Sankaracharya might say, neither enjoyment nor truth.*

What fate then remains for the children? If they had learnt only Bengali, they would have read the *Ramayana* and the *Maha-*

* There is a pun here, untranslatable into English, dependent on the double meaning of the word "Artha." The text runs:

अर्थमनर्थं भावय नित्यं
नास्ति ततः सुखदेयः सत्यम् ।

bharata. If they had not learnt anything, they would have had time to play—they would have climbed trees, dived into water, plucked flowers, played a thousand pranks on Mother Nature, and thus won a healthy body, a joyous mind, and the satisfaction of their child-nature. But in trying to learn English they get neither knowledge nor play ; they have no leisure to enter Nature's kingdom of Reality, and the door of Literature's kingdom of Fancy is closed against them.

Man has two fields of recreation, one within, one without. They are wide and free, and he draws from them life and strength and health ; for there the eternal rhythms of colour, form and fragrance, movement and music, love and rapture, pulse in all their rich diversity through his every limb, and lift his spirit into full flower. Yet our unfortunate children must be banished from these two motherlands of man, and chained in an alien prison ! These children, for whom God has filled a father's and a mother's heart with love, and prepared the softness of a mother's lap ; these who are so tiny, yet find the whole house, with all its empty spaces, too small for their play—where must these children spend their childhood ? Among the grammars and dictionaries of a foreign tongue ! In a cheerless, harsh, narrow dungeon wherein is no life, no joy, no leisure, no novelty, no inch of space for relaxation. How can a boy ever develop vigour of intellect, breadth of outlook, and strength of character in such surroundings ? Is he not bound to remain a pale, anaemic, emaciated, stunted creature ? When he grows to manhood, can he possibly achieve any object by his own initiative, overcome any obstacle by his own strength, look the world in the face in virtue of his own natural manliness ? Does he not learn only how to cram, to copy and to cringe ?

There is continuity between one stage of life and the next. It goes without saying that youth is a gradual growth out of boyhood. A young man cannot suddenly plunge into the work of the world and find all that is needed ready to his hand. The things that are really reliable and really needed in life grow with our own growth, little by little, like our hands and feet. They are not goods that can be bought in the bazaar, complete and ready-made, when we happen to want them.

There is no doubt that intelligence and imagination are both essential for the management of the business of life. In other words,

if a boy is to become a real man he cannot do without these two qualities. It follows, as indeed is obvious, that if we do not train the intellect and imagination from boyhood they will not be ready for use when the time for business arrives.

But in our present education that road is practically closed. We have to spend a very great deal of time on mere language-learning. I have said already that English is so foreign a language, and our teachers usually so little educated, that it is not easy for the thought to find entry into our minds along with the words. Thus it takes an enormously long time for us to become acquainted even in a small measure with English thought, and in the meantime the intellect gets nothing on which it may fitly exercise itself, and remains completely inactive. Up to the Entrance and First Arts*, we learn only a mediocre kind of English ; immediately afterwards we are suddenly confronted in the B. A. class with weighty volumes and subjects which call for the most serious thought. But now we have neither the time nor the ability to master them thoroughly ; we must perforce lump them all together and swallow them indiscriminately in great mouthfuls.

Merely to read, without thinking at the same time about what we are reading, means that we are piling up materials without at the same time building. Bricks, mortar, joists, rafters, sand and lime are heaped mountain-high, when there comes word from the University : "Put a roof over the third storey." Up we go at once to the top of our pile of materials, for two years we ram it down and reduce it to a more or less level condition—and, to be sure, it does look something like a roof. But is that what we mean by a mansion ? Is there any way of letting in light and air, any shelter fit for a man to spend his life in ? Can it protect us properly from exposure to the cold, or the scorching heat of the outside world ? Is any order, grace, or beauty to be found in it ?

In former times such an abundance of building material for our intellectual home was not within our reach. But it is a great mistake to take it for granted that by learning to accumulate we have learnt to build. It is only when accumulation and building go on at one and the same time, step by step, that the work is soundly done.

It follows that as soon as any suitable material comes to hand,

* *Entrance* is equivalent to the present Matriculation, and *First Arts* to the Intermediate standard.

its use should be mastered there and then, and its properties studied ; along with the living of the soul's life should go the building of the soul's home and refuge—*that* is sound education. A curious affair, and one without precedent, is going on in our country ; man is developing in one direction, while his learning is being accumulated in another—on the one hand are the storehouses burdened with useless food-stuffs, while on the other hand the stomach is consumed away by its own digestive juices.

Therefore if we wish to make a boy into a man, we must begin even in his boyhood to train him in manliness. Otherwise he will remain a boy, he will never grow to be a man. Instead of laying the whole stress on memory power, we must begin even from infancy to give him the fullest possible opportunity for the free exercise of his intellectual and imaginative faculties. Merely to plough from dawn to dark, to break the clods under the harrow—merely to bludgeon and cudgel, to cram and take examinations—these will not of themselves suffice to ripen a golden harvest in this incalculably precious field, this tilth of our human birth. Along with this dry soil, along with this ceaseless torment of cultivation, we must have moisture ; for the moister the earth, the richer the harvest. Moreover there is a certain special time when rain is particularly necessary for the paddy fields. If that time is missed, a thousand later rains will fail to bring so good a yield. Just so, as the stages of human life unfold there is a special time, when living thoughts and fresh fancies are essential to the full development of life and the lush vigour of its growth. If just at that time there should fall plentiful showers from the sky-world of literature, then “Blessed is the king, and blessed the kingdom.” When the newly-germinating plants of the heart first raise their heads out of the darkness of the fostering soil, and behold the wide earth and the infinite blue heavens, when they first cross the threshold of the secret chambers of their birth and make the acquaintance of the outside world, when they put forth in every direction their tender shoots of new interest, new wonder, new delight—if *then* the winds of thought should blow, and the light stream down in blessing from the realms of perennial joy, then indeed may the whole life come in the fulness of time to fruition and rich fulfilment. But if at that critical time the seed is buried under dry dust and burning sand, under lifeless grammars and foreign dictionaries, even though the rain should later fall in

torrents, though the new and living truth, the rich imagination and the lofty thought of European literature should be showered right and left, the mind cannot reach that full fruition, and the vitalising power with which literature is instinct cannot so freely reveal itself in the life.

While we are deep in our dry-as-dust learning, that auspicious moment of life goes by. From boyhood we pass to adolescence, from adolescence to young manhood, dragging a load of mere words. In the domain of Saraswati we can never be more than unskilled labourers. Our backs grow bent, but there is no all-round development of our manhood. When we enter the realm of English thought, we are no longer capable of moving in it with freedom and familiarity. Even when we can in some fashion comprehend the ideas, we cannot draw them into our hearts and make them our own. We use them in our speeches and writings, but cannot put them into practice in our lives.

The ideas which we thus study for some twenty years or more enter into no chemical combination with the lives we live, with the result that our minds present a fantastic appearance. Some of our ideas remain as it were gummed on, while others fall off in course of time. Just as savages take pride in painting and tattooing their bodies, hiding the lustre of their natural health, so do we go strutting about, our bodies smeared with an alien English learning which has hardly any connection with the inner reality of our life. Savage chiefs bedeck themselves in haphazard fashion with bits of cheap European glass and beads, and arrange European garments in most unorthodox positions on their bodies, incapable of understanding how fantastic and ridiculous they look. And we too swagger about with a few cheap flashy English words, bringing out the profound ideas of our English learning at inappropriate times and in completely wrong places, while we ourselves are incapable of understanding that we are unwilling actors in an absurd farce ; so that if we see anyone laughing at us we immediately begin to justify ourselves by impressive authorities from European history.

It is only if an education in ideas is given from childhood side by side with the education in language, only if the whole conduct of life is regulated in accordance with those ideas, that our lives as a whole can attain a real integrity, that we ourselves can grow naturally

into real manhood, and maintain a proper balance between our various pursuits.

When we think seriously about the matter we see that the education we receive is inadequate to the life that we shall be living. Our text-books paint us no noble picture of that household in which *we* shall pass all our days ; our newly-acquired literature holds up no high ideal for the society in which *we* shall have to spend our lives ; we do not meet in its pages with *our* fathers and mothers, dear ones and friends, brothers and sisters ; the every-day work of *our* lives finds no place in its descriptions ; there resounds in it no music of *our* sky or of *our* earth, *our* stainless dawns or lovely evenings, *our* cornfields rich in grain, the streams which endow *our* land with plenty. When we consider these facts, we realise that there can be no inherent likelihood that our education and our lives will influence each other at all profoundly ; there is bound to be a barrier between them. All our life's essential needs can never be satisfied by our education. Not on the soil where our lives are rooted, but away on the horizon, streams down the rain of our learning. The few drops that manage to seep through to us are not enough to moisten our parched ground. It follows inevitably from the present system of education that the acquirements in which we pass our whole childhood fit us for nothing but a clerkship or a trade, and that we have no use for them in our everyday life at home, but take them off and fold them away in the box along with our office turban and *chaddar*. It is unjust to put the blame for this on our students. Their book-world and their living-world lie on opposed shores, and there is no bridge but the grammar and the dictionary. For this reason it should cause no surprise that one and the same man should attain on the one hand to vast scholarship in European philosophy, science and logic, and should continue on the other hand to nurse age-old superstitions ; that he should preach glowing ideals of freedom, yet continue every moment to entangle himself and others in the enervating, enfeebling meshes of a thousand webs of slavery ; that he should enjoy in his solitude the fellowship of literature and its wealth of varied thought, and yet not strive to ascend in his living towards those pinnacles of thought, but exert himself only for money and worldly promotion. For there is a truly impenetrable barrier between his learning and his conduct, and the two can never meet and mingle.

The result of this is that each becomes more and more unfriendly towards the other. As life goes on persistently contradicting learning, there is born in us a thorough-going mistrust and contempt for it. We come to think that the whole thing is hollow, and that the whole of European culture is founded on that hollowness ; that all that is our own is true, and that the path to which our education points leads to a realm of illusion and falsehood which is miscalled civilisation. It does not occur to us that our education has failed because of the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed ; we jump to the conclusion that the cause of the failure is something inherent in the subject-matter of the education itself. Thus the more we despise our education, the more does our education turn its back upon us, and the less completely can it influence our conduct. And so the domestic feud between learning and life goes on growing, each bitterly and incessantly mocking at the other, till between his stunted living and his stunted learning the life of a Bengalee is reduced to a farce.

If then the education on which we have spent a third of our lifetime is doomed to remain for ever divorced from life, and we ourselves are cheated of the opportunity for any other education, by what means can our life reach its true meaning ?

The most urgent and exacting task of our day is to effect a reconciliation between this education of ours and our daily lives.

But what can effect such a union ? My answer is, the language and literature of Bengal. When Bankim Babu's *Bangadarsan*,* like some new dawn, first rose upon this Bengal of ours, why was it that the innermost heart of the whole educated community was roused to such unprecedented emotion ? Did *Bangadarsan* publish any new knowledge, any new discovery unknown to European philosophy, science, or history ? It was not that. *Bangadarsan* was the means by which a man of powerful genius broke down the barrier between our English education and our inner being ; brought about, at long last, a happy commingling of life and intellect ; led the exile back to his home and filled the house with lights for the festival. All this time the Lord Krishna had been reigning at Mathura, and after some

* Monthly journal edited by Bankimchandra Chatterjee, the famous Bengali novelist. The first issue of the journal was published in 1872.

score or five and twenty years, by means of entreaties to the door-keeper, we would get a distant glimpse of him ; *Bangadarsan* was the envoy who brought him to reside in our Brindavan. Now a new radiance suffused our homes, our society, and our inner being. We saw Suryamukhi and Kamalmani in the women of our own homes, Chandrasekhar and Pratap* created for the men of Bengal a world of higher ideals, our trivial daily lives were illumined by a glorious ray of light.

As a result of that new and happy experience, the matchless gift of *Bangadarsan*, the educated classes of the present day are enthusiastic to express their thoughts in Bengali. They have realised at least that while English may be the language of our daily work, it is not the language of our minds. They have seen with their own eyes that even though from childhood we have devoted such enormous care exclusively to learning English, nevertheless whatever of our modern national literature has any permanent value is being written exclusively in Bengali. The main reason for this is that a Bengalee can never attain to such an intimate knowledge of the inmost spirit of the English language as to give free expression in it to the upsurge of ideas and emotions which is the stuff of literature. Even if he were to come to such intimacy with the language, the fact remains that the Bengalee's thoughts cannot be expressed in any really living way in the language of the Englishman. All those peculiar tendernesses and delicate associations of memory that stir us to self-expression, all those immemorial rites and traditions which have cast our minds into their peculiar mould—such things can never find true release in a foreign language.

Therefore as soon as our educated classes desire to express their own thoughts, they turn with a wistful longing to Bengali. But alas for that proud language, where is she ? After being slighted so long, will she come forthwith, at a moment's call, and surrender herself in all her beauty and splendour to any conceited pedant puffed up with the vanity of learning ? And you, O learned and superior man, do *you* know the true worth of this artless tender maiden language of ours ? Have you ever given a thought, ever opened your heart, to the profound meaning of the bright laughter, the tear-laden compassion, the sparkling energy, the friendliness, love and devotion

* Characters in Bankimohandra's novels.

with which her glance is radiant ? “I have read Mill and Spencer,” you think ; “I have passed all my examinations ; I am an independent, thoughtful, intelligent young man ; unlucky fathers with marriageable daughters come suppliant to my door, offering me along with the daughter all their worldly possessions. This contemptible Bengali, belonging as she does to common, illiterate village folk, should have been only too happy to be at my beck and call. That I, who have studied English, should write Bengali—what better luck could Bengali have ? Considering that I have abandoned the fame I could so easily have won in English, and carelessly flung away such a gift of profound thought on this wretched land, all these petty obstacles ought to have fled precipitately from my path, like poor tattered travellers who respectfully stand aside when they see the king coming. Just think, how much good I intend to confer on you ! I can tell you two or three things about political economy ; I will not wholly keep from you what I have learnt about the working of the principles of evolution in the realm of living matter, in human society, and even in the spiritual world ; in the footnotes to my historical and philosophical essays I shall collect for you all kinds of quotations and illustrations from abstruse works in many tongues ; and no Bengalee shall remain unaware of what any critic says about any book in European literature. But if this crude beggarly language of yours does not come forward at my summons and welcome me with respect, I won’t write in Bengali ; I’ll become a lawyer, or a deputy magistrate, or write leaders in an English newspaper, and the loss to you will be incalculable.”

Most unfortunately for Bengal, this shy but spirited daughter of hers, the Bengali tongue, is not forward in welcoming all these bright young men ; and on their side the bright young men take offence and sever all connection with her. So much so that they do not write even letters in Bengali ; when they meet friends they use Bengali as sparingly as possible, and banish Bengali books contemptuously to the women’s quarters. The punishment is out of all proportion to the crime.

I have already described how in our school days we study words unaccompanied by any ideas, and that when we grow up the exact opposite happens—ideas come to us, but we have no words to express them. I have referred also to the fact that because our

powers of thought do not develop in inseparable connection with our powers of expression, we are not truly at home in European thought, and in consequence many of our educated men have begun to show distaste for all European ideas. On the other hand, because there has been no strong link between their ideas and their study of the mother-tongue, they have been estranged from it and have conceived a contempt for it. Instead of confessing frankly that they do not know Bengali, they say : "Is it possible to express any real thought in Bengali ? Such a language is unworthy of enlightened minds like ours !" If the truth must be told, we unconsciously despise the grapes and call them sour because they are out of reach.

From whatever aspect we approach the matter, it is clear that the essential harmony between our thought, language and life has been lost. Man is divided, and frustrated ; he can achieve no organic integrity within himself and so can make no firm stand ; he cannot put his hand at the right time on what he needs. There is a story of a poor man who used to gather alms bit by bit all the cold weather, but was no sooner able to buy warm clothes than the hot weather would set in—and by the time he had laboured through the hot weather and bought his thin clothes, it would be almost winter again. At last a kind god took pity on his misery and offered him a boon. "I want only one thing," the man cried. "Save me from this topsyturvydom. All my life I have been getting my winter clothes in summer, and my summer clothes in winter. If you could just set that right, I shall have nothing left to wish for !"

That prayer is ours too ; save us from our topsyturvydom, and we shall be content. All our misery is due to the fact that we cannot make our winter clothes coincide with winter nor our summer clothes with summer. Otherwise we have all we need. Let us therefore ask only this boon of God, that our possessions may be rightly matched—rice with hunger, clothes with winter, language with thought, and learning with life. We are like Kabir's fish :

Pānime mīna piyāsi

*Sunata sunata lāge hāsi.**

We have water, yet we are a-thirst ; the world sees it and laughs ; tears come to our eyes—but we cannot drink.

* *Lit.* Fish athirst in water,
Those who hear laugh.

THE IMMORAL NOVEL

André Gide

By Dr. ALEX ARONSON

THE personality and work of André Gide remind us of a short story by Dostoevsky, *The Double*. In this story Dostoevsky sketches the character and experiences of a man who is haunted by his double ; his hallucinations go so far that he is coming across him everywhere and has no doubts whatsoever about his actual existence. Reality and imagination are strangely intermingled and it is left to the reader to decide who is the real man and who the double.

André Gide's novels analyse with great intellectual subtlety and an almost unrestrained sincerity the problems of the modern "soul" ; he looks at life as an experience in which the dualism of thought and emotion, reason and the senses, seems to split the human being into two. The mature and unified character is the aim of Gide's analysis ; he, however, never represents such a human being in his books. He is more interested in the development, the struggles and contradictions in man, but always in view of the ideal to be attained. The ideal is frequently stated either in terms of ratiocination or in lyrical outbursts, but the individual never reaches it, except in his imagination.

Gide's great importance in a critical study of the modern novel lies in the fact that long before 1920 he was aware of the loss of moral and spiritual values, the decay of spontaneity, and the growing frustration that characterised the post-war period in Europe. Gide's influence as a writer dated from that time when people suddenly realised that he had penetrated into their own conflicts long before they themselves were aware of them. It is indeed one of the peculiar characteristics of most of the significant novelists between 1920 and 1930 that at the end of the last war they were in the average 40 years old—or even more. They belong to that generation of writers whose critical awareness had been trained in the years before the war and who, therefore, were during and after the war intensely conscious of the changes and the breakdown in values around them. André Gide made his own consciousness the subject-matter of most of his novels ;

in this way his work becomes truly autobiographical. The main character in his book is the author himself. And Gide analyses himself through the experiences and sensibilities of his creations. From the point of view of technique it is evident that confessions, letters, and self-revelations, will be preferred to the objective and impersonal art of story-telling. Thus it frequently happens that while writing the book, the author is particularly eager to convince the reader that it is not a "book" he is writing, but "life itself": "Some people might have made a book of it, but the story I am going to tell is one which it took all my strength to live and over which I spent all my virtue."¹

André Gide's novels mostly deal with the life of intellectuals; he was perhaps the first among the significant modern writers to choose the intellectual as the main character of his work. The intellectual, so seemed to Gide, is more open to outside influences, less biased and prejudiced, and intensely conscious of the forces of the environment that are all the time working against him; this partly explains the modern novelist's interest in introspection and artistic creation. In itself, this is a great step forward: for until very recently, the artist was not considered to be a fit and proper subject for the novel. The modern novelist could not help analysing his own position in the light of society. In this sense most of the novels under discussion will be found to be "personal".²

André Gide was, throughout his work, consciously striving to come to an ultimate understanding of his intellectual self. What he therefore had to do was to "invent the character of a novelist", whom he would make the central figure of his book; "and the subject of the book, if you must have one, is just that very struggle between what reality offers him and what he himself desires to make of it."³ It is a peculiarity of modern novelists to look at life as a whole and to identify themselves, at least to a certain degree, with the characters and experiences they are going to depict. Gide's "novelist"—one of the main characters in his *The Counterfeiters*—is continually identifying

1. *Strait is the Gate*, p. 9.

2. All novels dealing with the artist in modern society are autobiographical; see: Knut Hamsun: *Hunger*; Thomas Mann: *Tonio Kroeger*; Aldous Huxley: *Point Counter Point*; Marcel Proust: *Remembrance of Things Past*; James Joyce: *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*.

3. *The Counterfeiters*, p. 178.

himself and is so absorbed in his own responses to human beings and situations that he hardly ever succeeds in "telling his story". This experience of identification is so intense that there is no energy left for artistic creation. It is significant that this experience of a novelist should form one of the main points of interest in the book : it undoubtedly was Gide's own : "Nothing could be more different from me than myself. It is only sometimes when I am alone that the substratum emerges and that I attain a certain fundamental continuity ; but at such times I am on the very verge of ceasing to exist. My heart beats only out of sympathy ; I live only through others—by procuration, so to speak, and by espousals ; and I never feel myself living so intensely as when I escape from myself to become no matter who."¹

The psychological background for this identification was, however, self-analysis and introspection. Gide's "novelist" is a Hamlet in disguise, one who lives and at the same time watches himself living ; one who is driven towards his destiny by forces beyond his control and who still goes on analysing those very forces ; one who loves reality and who cannot prevent himself from dissecting life until he feels nothing but disgust for his frustrated attempts at living. To be both a spontaneous and almost passionate "actor" and at the same time to watch in an impersonally detached and scientific manner one's own actions, is the rather complicated situation in which most of Gide's characters find themselves—whenver they experience something. Nothing could be more like Hamlet : it is indeed a contemporary attitude : "The thing that I have the greatest difficulty in believing in, is my own reality. I am constantly getting outside myself, and as I watch myself act I cannot understand how a person who acts is the same as the person who is watching him act, and who wonders in astonishment and doubt how he can be actor and watcher at the same moment."²

Gide's novels are in their essence novels of ideas. His main characters being frequently intellectuals, novelists, and artists, they cannot help experiencing life in terms of artistic creation. The "novelist" in *The Counterfeiters* is constantly on the lookout for possible subject-matters, characters, and situations, which he wants

1. *Ibid.*, 64.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

to utilize in his book. Gide succeeds to a considerable extent in showing the writer "at work", although the reader is sometimes painfully aware of the "novelist's" over-strained consciousness. Gide has, however, for the first time formulated some of the guiding principles of novel-writing in our time ; he was the first to express ideas about literature which were undoubtedly influenced by the art of Dostoevsky, but which provided the oncoming generation of novelists in Europe with a new technique and a new attitude to literature. Although we are not here concerned with Gide's literary criticism, we cannot overlook the very significant remarks about literature that are to be found in his novels most of which were published in France before 1925—and which might give us a clue to the remarkable influence that Dostoevsky had on the post-war novel in Europe.

It would be a very difficult undertaking indeed to say what is meant by a "pure" novel. It would be a piece of literature that is "nothing but a novel." Human situations and attitudes, the soul or the character and its conflicts with reality, our aspirations and longings, our failures and achievements, all that would be part of the "pure" novel. It is, in short, the novel of introspection that is the "purest" of all ; the individual soul under a magnifying glass against the rather hazy and foggy background of a conflictless middle-class society ; Dostoevsky's vacuum in a new setting. The "rest" is left to the reader's imagination : "I should like to strip the novel of every element that does not specifically belong to the novel. . . . Even the description of the characters does not seem to me properly to belong to the genre. . . . The novelist does not as a rule rely sufficiently on the reader's imagination."¹

Gide even goes a step further. He cannot possibly accept any artificial limits imposed upon either his characters or the situations he depicts : life itself is limitless, is, as it were, "unanimous" and whole. Dostoevsky too could conceive of life as a unified whole of contradictory forces, but he never sacrificed "form" for the sake of a "synthetic" formlessness. Gide's magnifying-glass wants to be everywhere all at once, his "novelist" wants to respond to "everything" in the same over-intense way ; he would like "to put everything into (his) novel. I don't want any cut of the scissors to limit its substance at one point rather than at another. For more than a

1 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

year now that I have been working at it, nothing happens to me that I don't put into it—everything I see, everything I know, everything that other people's lives and my own teach me."¹

The known world of sense perception does not tempt him. The novelist has to discover new lands—especially the "hinterlands" of the soul, the "mysteries" of human existence, those states of consciousness which will after Gide again become the most important subject-matter for novelists: "I have often thought that in art, and particularly in literature, the only people who count are those who launch out on the unknown seas. One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time. But our writers are afraid of the open; they are mere coasters."²

The unknown is always the uncommon, the eccentric, and frequently the morbid. To rid literature of the commonplace, the average, was undoubtedly Gide's aim. Although in itself this tendency corresponds to Dostoevsky's attitude to art, Gide was perhaps not aware of the fact that even the common, the average, and the "known", are not without their possibilities in fiction; James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a good instance to the point. When Gide complains of those people who deny "the possibility of any fact as soon as it diverges from the commonplace" and adds that it is not for them that he writes, he implicitly refuses to deal with the commonplace in his novels.³

The inner being of man, the very quintessence of his soul, then, is the main point of interest in Gide's novels. As always in an age of transition, the novelist goes back to the "simplicity" of the inner world of thought and emotion; he isolates the soul and makes her almost independent of her environment. To go back to the very root of one's being where passions, emotions, and feelings are still latent and all the potentialities of man lie dormant, is Gide's first and foremost artistic ambition: "There is a kind of

1. *Ibid.*, p. 175. (Marcel Proust and James Joyce carried this statement to its logical conclusion.)

2. *Ibid.*, p. 826.

3. See the following passage from Dostoevsky's *Idiot* (p. 449): "To fill a novel with typical characters only, or with merely strange and uncommon people, would render the book unreal and improbable and would very likely destroy the interest. In my opinion, the duty of the novelist is to seek out points of interest and instruction even in the characters of commonplace people."

tragedy, it seems to me, which has hitherto almost entirely eluded literature. The novel has dealt with the contrariness of fate, good or evil fortune, social relationships, conflicts and passions, and of characters, but not with the very essence of man's being."¹ If that is the aim of the novel then there will be no more place in it for make-believe, for illusions about our ideal self, for the hypocrisy of conventions. Gide points the way towards the dissolution and breakdown not only of literary, but also of moral values. It is significant that the following statement is made by a character who is a morally dissolute person, but who at the same time is quite capable of discerning between genuine and conventional attitudes. "We live upon nothing but feelings which have been taken for granted once for all and which the reader imagines he experiences, because he believes everything he sees in print ; the author builds on this as he does on the conventions which he believes to be the foundations of his art."²

We have devoted so much space to Gide's literary theories, because it often seems as though his search for new moral values was for him a matter of "intellectual" importance, as though the characters and experiences he deals with are the result not of a spontaneous creative effort, but of various intellectual and literary considerations of which we have given a few instances. We are all the time aware that the search for moral values is in some way forced upon his characters by the author himself who, perhaps, was too introspective to "experience" this search himself and found a compensation for his own failure in the character and experiences of his heroes. He, among modern writers, is the first to escape from the banality of middle-class existence to a kind of wish-fulfilment in his "immoral" heroes, his "bastards", and "motiveless" criminals. How superior they seem to the aimless novelist, and at the same time how fascinating is the relationship between the bastard Bernard (one of the heroes in *The Counterfeiters*) and the novelist Edouard, and between the bastard Lafcadio (in *Lafcadio's Adventures*) and Julius, the writer. Julius and Edouard both reflect André Gide's own helplessness and sense of frustration, Bernard and Lafcadio, the nostalgic wish-fulfilment. Do not these two young men teach the intellectual

1. *The Counterfeiters*, p. 112.

2. *Ibid.* p. 807.

how to "live"? Is not their social status as "bastards" superior to any other, in as much as it loosens all restrictions imposed upon them by society, makes them free and "natural" again? Gide's silent admiration for the "bastard" as a human type forcibly reminds us of a similar nostalgic admiration in the work of Thomas Mann and D. H. Lawrence. This is, properly speaking, what is meant by the "return-to-nature" attitude in the modern novel: an envy and admiration, and, perhaps, also a slight contempt for all those that are free from the conflicts and the mental anguish of Hamlet, the intellectual and the artist: "It is to bastards that the future belongs. How full of meaning is the expression 'a natural child'! The bastard alone has the right to be natural."¹

The writer who for such a long time had been rejected by the middle-classes and had become an object of ridicule, now turns against that very class of people which had given him his "culture" and which to a large extent constitutes his reading public. In Gide's attitude there is a good deal of what we may call intellectual snobbery, a feeling of superiority which, at bottom, is a compensation for his own failure as a social being. Whenever we find cynicism in the modern novel—as, for instance, also in Aldous Huxley and Thomas Mann—it is usually the result of a frustrated desire for an adequate group. When Bernard, the bastard, says "a worthy bourgeois can't understand how one can be worthy in any other fashion than his own", he voices the discontent of a generation of writers who all felt like bastards with regard to the society into which they happened to be born. Their notions of vice and virtue had to be changed accordingly. Gide's own puritan upbringing, similar to that of Lawrence, gave him the necessary impetus for rebellion. He, therefore, rejected both virtue and vice as conventional and "bourgeois", and replaced them by an emphasis on unrestrained instincts and impulses: "Yes, I think the most sincere thing about me is a horror—a hatred of everything people call virtue. Don't try to understand. You have no idea what a Puritan bringing-up can do to one. It leaves one with an incurable resentment in one's heart . . . to judge by myself."²

1. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 846.

Virtue, throughout the work of Gide, is equivalent for repression. With virtue, therefore, is meant the artificially imposed restriction upon our instinctual life. Sometimes it even implies the voluntary or unconscious renunciation of all sensual gratification on the basis of religious teachings. In whatever sense Gide uses this word, it always evokes in him the image of a prison out of which his characters try to escape. It is in the light of these remarks that we have to understand the following two statements: "At present it is with myself alone that I fight; it is of my own virtue that I am the irremediable prisoner."¹ And: "Every one of these triumphs over myself was another turn of the key in the door of my prison. . . ."²

According to Gide, the contrary of virtue is not vice, but rather the resurrection of the body and the senses, a spontaneous approach to both nature and man, an identification with all the things of the earth. This attitude does not fundamentally differ from the Laurentian identification with the "dark passions of the past". Gide, however, is more of the earth; his response to nature, for instance, as something living and for ever growing, is more "human" and more spontaneously lyrical than that of Lawrence, who often saw in nature some kind of timeless and mysterious force. Both Gide and Lawrence have, however, one tendency in common: the refusal to accept ideas as a substitute for one's frustrated sensual desires. If virtue is no more, let there be no more "ideas" either. But whereas Lawrence seems to prefer the "noble savage" in his novels, Gide never loses sight of the fact that even instinctual gratification has to partake of some kind of higher intelligence and sensibility, if it should not deteriorate into brutality and undisguised eroticism. The readers and admirers of Lawrence might object to the subtlety, refinement, and complexity of Gide's attitude to love. It is undoubtedly a highly intellectualised and even spiritualised kind of love he usually represents in his novels—although at the basis of it there is the same protest against "virtue" as in his English contemporary Lawrence.

Gide was too fine an observer of human nature not to notice the actual effects of this "virtue", the constant presence of invisible laws and restrictions, upon the relationship between men and women.

1. *School for Wives*.

2. *The Counterfeiters*, p. 109.

If instinctual gratification is prevented, they will both take refuge in their own imagination, they will idealise the beloved person until there is no more similarity left between ideal and reality. The crisis occurs in the novel, when both of them realize the futility of their emotions. In Gide's two novels, *The Immoralist* and *Strait is the Gate* we come across such crises ; in the case of the former (the most Laurentian of all Gide's novels) "virtue" is replaced by the resurrected body, whereas in the latter "virtue" wins and the problem remains unsolved. With an admirable precision of psychological details, Gide guides the reader through this labyrinth of indistinct and contradictory emotions, until the story reaches its climax with the frustration of the one and the death of the other. And yet their "love" seems to us sometimes infinitely more intense than the outspoken sensuality of Lawrence's "dark passions". The following two passages constitute the climax of the book : "Yes, no doubt she was right ! It was nothing but a phantom that I cared for ; the Alissa that I have loved, that I still loved, was no more. . . . If by slow degrees I had exalted her, if out of her I had made myself an idol, and adorned it with all that I was enamoured of, what remained to me as the result of my labours but my fatigue ?"¹ And : "Thanks to you, my friend, my dream climbed so high that any earthly satisfaction would have been a declension. I have often thought of what our life with each other would have been ; as soon as it had been less than perfect, I could not have borne our love."²

Whenever Gide depicts a love situation in his novels we are reminded of the old tradition in French literature to analyse by means of intelligence and reasoning the origin and cause of emotions in the soul of the lover and the beloved. This analytical approach can best be studied in Pascal and La Rochefoucault in the 17th century, in Rousseau's *Confessions* in the 18th, and lastly in Stendhal's work at the beginning of the 19th century. Gide follows the tradition, adding, as it were, a contemporary flavour to the analysis. Gide's love is in its very essence intellectualised, without therefore becoming less intense. A disciple of La Rochefoucault and Stendhal, he is intensely aware of the re-creation of the individual in a relationship of this kind ; and he also insists on the fact that formation of character is possible only in

1. *Strait is the Gate*, p. 176.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

a love-relationship where both partners give and receive on a basis of equality. So it comes about that both the man and the woman are conscious of the influence they exercise over each other, so much so indeed that the moment love ceases to exist between them, they lose themselves in the sudden realization of their own insignificance. To be for ever conscious of this inter-exchange of values and attitudes might lead towards sophistication and, ultimately, morbidity ; Gide's heroes are, in fact, frequently both sophisticated and morbid—not so much in their actual love than in their analysis of it. Let us listen to a man's confession : "I forsake my own emotion to feel only hers. And I think that if she were not there to give definition to my personality, it would vanish in the excessive vagueness of its contours. It is only round her that I concentrate and define myself."¹ And here is the corresponding statement made by a woman : "Sometimes as I listen to him talking, I seem to be watching myself think. He explains me and discovers me to myself. Should I exist without him ? I *am* only when I am with him."²

Gide's heroes are aim-inhibited characters whose Puritan upbringing frequently makes them look at love from a "spiritual" angle. They confound love and God. A similar process already takes place in some of Dostoevsky's novels where, in fact, the "true love" is often identified with spiritual awareness, "brotherly" feelings, and universal sympathy. In the same way as Dostoevsky's "soul" reaches perfection only in some mystical union with both the visible and invisible universe, Gide's "souls" lose their beliefs when they fail to find fulfilment in the objects of their love. This applies again to both men and women (whereas Dostoevsky's mystic experience is reserved to men only ;—D. H. Lawrence would also be an interesting point of comparison). Gide's lyricism is, perhaps, slightly too explicit to be always quite convincing : "And in the midst of my distress I suddenly realized that I ceased to believe in God at the same time that I ceased to believe in Robert."³ And in one of his novels, even a priest himself has to face the conflict : "Lord, it sometimes seems to me that I need her love in order to love Thee."⁴

1. *The Counterfeiters*, p. 68.

2. *Strait is the Gate*, p. 208.

3. *The School for Wives*, p. 78.

4. *The Pastoral Symphony*.

The most disastrous anti-climax of such a relationship is marriage. It constitutes, according to Gide, the final breakdown of all emotional and spiritual values in the life of the two persons concerned. Conventions take the place of spontaneous emotions. His novels are full of descriptions of a "progressive and reciprocal decrystallization of husband and wife." Life itself ceases and the only means of keeping life going is the "bastard"—the one who has no family, and therefore knows no restrictions—the prodigal son, the foundling. Almost all his novels consist of these two aspects of human life placed side by side, the family, on the one hand, and the uprooted individual, on the other. And we cannot help feeling that, again and again, Gide's deepest sympathy goes to the rebelling son or daughter, to the generation of children, who, although demoralized, have the advantage of sincerity and spontaneity both in their thoughts and their deeds. It is the generation of those who reached maturity towards the end of the last war and whose illusions had not been shattered by the experience of the battle-fields, those who cannot and will not accept the fact that most married couples have lost their belief in the sanctity of their union, and who call such a statement a "blasphemy".

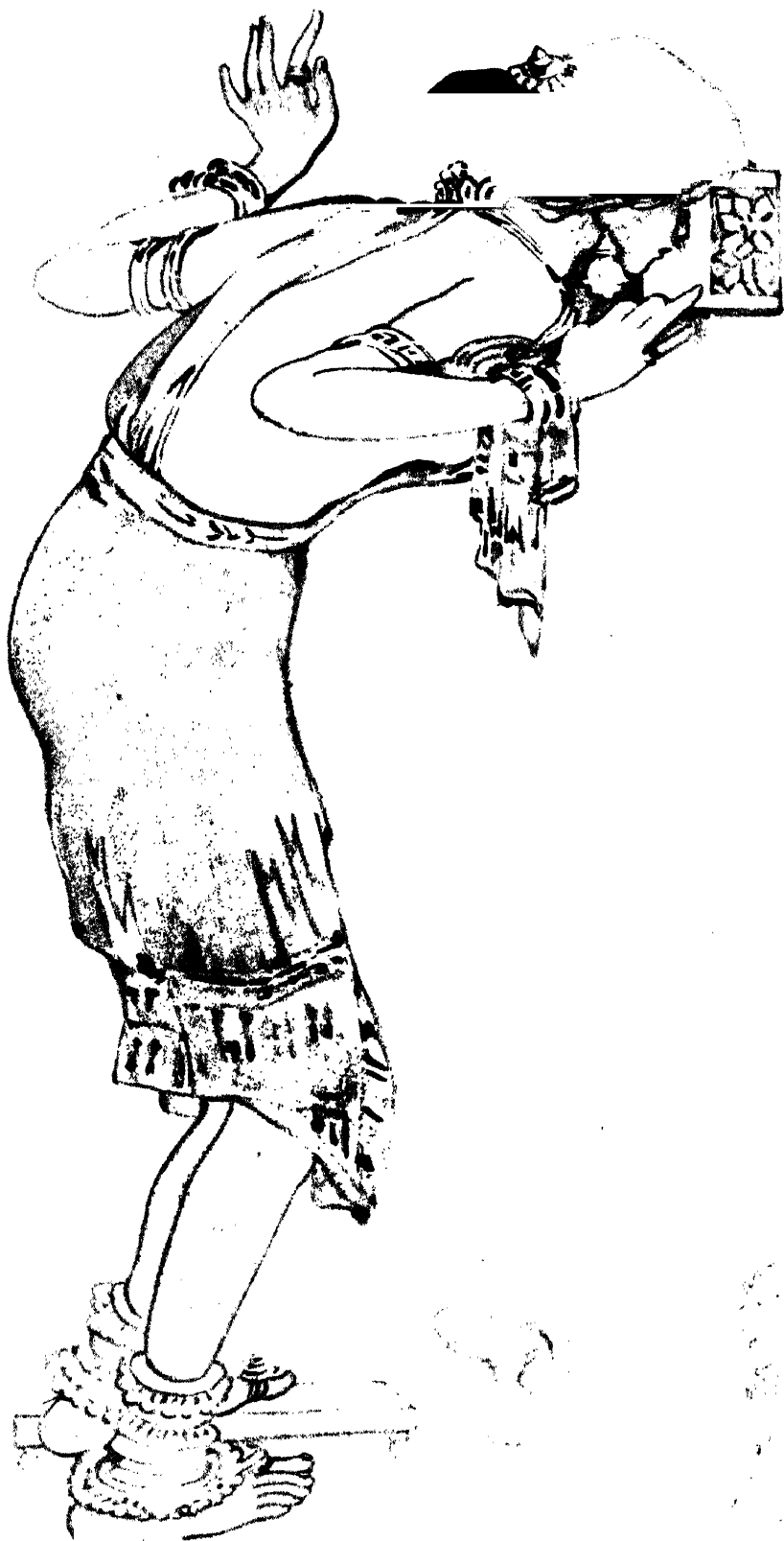
One day or another, however, these youthful rebels lose their illusions about their parents. Here a comparative study of the relationship between the two generations as depicted by Gide and Lawrence would be most illuminating. They both revolt, but Lawrence's young men and women find fulfilment and self-realization in their rebellion, while Gide's "natural children" turn all too frequently cynical. The reason may be that Gide's youths are more "intelligent", indeed more intellectual, than Lawrence's "noble savages".

Such characters are bound to act—provided they act at all—in a "motiveless" way, since the so-called good motives that they have been taught to respect by society are hardly ever based upon a genuine impulse, but upon conventions and hypocrisy. Dostoevsky's novels are full of motiveless actions; but there the characters are not aware of this lack of motive; they indeed act spontaneously. In Gide the heroes are conscious of their own eccentricity, and to such an extent that we can almost say that they are conscious of their lack of consciousness. This is a complicated process; for it amounts to saying that they actually motivate their motiveless actions. This is

what Lafcadio does before he commits his utterly senseless murder ; this is also what Bernard does before he leaves the house of his step-father. And after Lafcadio has committed the crime, he goes on dissecting and analysing it together with his friend, the novelist Julius, who, in his own turn, has the rather striking idea of writing a novel about it. So it happens that the novelist explains to the criminal the "reasons" for his committing the crime, being at the same time utterly unaware of the fact that the crime has actually been committed and that the murderer is sitting in front of him. Julius wants to write a book (we know, however, he will never be able to write it ; and, anyhow, there is no more need for such a book, since Gide himself has already written it), in which "the hero is to be a young man whom I wish to make a criminal. . . . I don't want a motive for the crime—all I want is an explanation of the criminal. . . . Just think ! a crime that has no motive either in passions or need ! his very reason for committing the crime is just to commit it without any reason."¹

André Gide is already almost a classic among modern novelists. A contemporary of Marcel Proust, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and Thomas Mann, he belongs to that generation of writers in Europe who escaped from the pressing political and economic issues that confronted them, into self-analysis and introspection. They were deeply aware of the disintegration of values around them : not being able to take sides, they could not prevent it. They wrote of the resurrection of the body and the new freedom of individual conscience ; but they did not tell us how to fulfil ourselves in action. They wrote of the struggle of the young against the old for emancipation ; but they did not tell us the goal towards which the young should march. They wrote of the chaos and the darkness that encompass the modern man's search for certainty ; they did not tell us of the dawn. There is something missing in Gide, as in all of them : the belief that out of the struggle between conflicting evils a new awareness will spring investing human life with a new significance. The awareness that only deep down, among the roots, will the artist of the future be born, among those who labour and toil, and who can afford being good without being "immoral".

1. *Ibid.*, p. 227.



NAI TALIM : HOW I VIEW IT

By G. RAMACHANDRAN

[Nai Talim or Basic Education (the Wardha Scheme as it is sometimes called) is a revolutionary departure from the traditional methods of education. Though its mission promises incalculable possibilities of good for the large majority of our people its purpose and its methods are but imperfectly understood by our intelligentsia. This article written by the Asst. Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh (the Society founded by Mahatma Gandhi for the development and propagation of Nai Talim) will, it is hoped, contribute to a better understanding of this vital factor in our national reconstruction.

—Ed.]

THERE are the two worlds we know. First there is the world of Nature. There is then the world made by man, the world we call Human Society. Both these are great worlds. And there is one great fundamental factor common to both. The world of Nature and the world of Man have both come from creative work and are sustained and nourished by work. Behind and beneath the silent and often impassive face of Nature ceaseless and tremendous work goes on every moment. Even within the inconceivably tiny structure of an atom further innumerable and tinier subdivisions of matter revolve endlessly. Human Society too presents the spectacle of ceaseless life only through ceaseless activity. Where in Nature or in Society work ends, life ends too. Work is thus literally life. If we can meditate on this truth and realise fully its significance, then it has a revolutionary message for each one of us engaged in educational reconstruction.

Whether we like it or not, or evade it or not, work is the law of life. But all real work has a complex texture. As with human beings so too with work ; it has a body and a soul. Work has a material aspect. From this comes the production of material goods. Its soul consists in its potency to enrich the minds of all those who engage in work. Work is thus a unity of material and spiritual factors. We can extract from work material products. In fact work has been valued because it produces all those materials which our earthly life needs. But to approach work merely to extract

material products is to approach it in the spirit of lust. To do so is to go to work for taking from it only a part of what it can give, and to miss getting from it the other part, which is the far more precious of the two. For we then forget that work has a soul, the potency to enrich our minds. If we want to get from work all that it can give, we must approach it in the spirit of love and not of lust. In love we seek the heart and not the body.

In NAI TALIM is the challenge to us to approach work in the spirit of love. We are not merely to extract material production from work but we must win its soul for the growth of all our human culture for the real education of our minds. In NAI TALIM every boy and girl, every man and woman, has the chance to win the soul of work and thus win its body too. In NAI TALIM no single material result of work is lost. On the contrary, by winning education and culture from it even the material results are bettered. Can we not now see why Gandhiji insists that all NAI TALIM, from "the cradle to the grave," is simply and wholly education through work and activity? Who but a fool will then seek the body of work, throwing away the chance to win its heart and soul?

In a sense we have no choice either. We must all work with our hands and limbs in any just social order. That work must be relegated to certain classes in society is an old bourgeois idea now thoroughly exploded. The just social order conceived by the West is one of a class-less society as in Communism. The East in India is conceiving such a just social order through Satyagraha. But in both work by all for all holds the centre. Now then, if we must all work, and cannot in any manner escape it at all, is it not just the part of wisdom that we seek and obtain from the work we must do all that it can give, its body and its soul? To so seek and obtain from such work as we select to do its bodily gifts in the shape of material products and its spiritual gifts in the shape of a rich and vital education is the purpose of NAI TALIM. Not to allow the great stream of work to run away into an ocean of mere material production but to obtain from it all that is of value to the human mind is its central idea. So long as this is not realised NAI TALIM will appear difficult and puzzling. But once this central idea is grasped NAI TALIM will be like a full-masted ship with all its sails set, sailing smoothly and swiftly with the wind.

II

How shall we approach work in the spirit of love ? How shall we win the soul of work ? The seeds of all our likes and dislikes, loves and hates are sown in our minds when we are children. All our prejudices for and against every thing begin their journey in us as we ourselves begin the journey of our life. So love of work must begin when we are children. If for any reason children learn to dislike work, then all through their life, in youth and in old age, that dislike will persist in them. In such case more and more education will mean more and more running away from all work with the fingers and the limbs. Is not this very largely so today in what passes all around us for education ? Every parent and teacher knows that children love to “do” things more than to “learn” things. In present day education the “doing” and the “learning” are two different processes, and children are compelled to make a choice between the two which really should come to them as one integral unit. How often do parents and teachers say sternly to children who are “active” in the garden or handling some instrument or other object, “Now leave off, and go to your books.” Books ! books ! they have become a curse instead of the blessing they should be in a proper educational system. Most of the learning in schools today begins and ends with books. It is this Chinese wall of books that shuts out the healthful touch of the earth and of work from our children. Books in their proper place should help to quicken and deepen the contact of the mind with the reality of life ; but when they come leaping at us over the limits, overwhelming us on all sides, then they build a prison around us filling our minds with frustration and benumbing our fingers and limbs into devitalising inaction, adversely affecting our life and culture as a whole. So when we guide the child away from books in NAI TALIM and turn its eyes towards such creative work as it can do, we are doing no harm to its autonomy, but only rescuing it from a prison and enabling it to plunge joyously into that very autonomy which is its birth-right. In NAI TALIM we recognise unreservedly that children love to “do” things and that it is good that it is so. We therefore encourage children to develop their love of “doing” things and show them that the best way to “learn” things is to “do” things. Doing and learning thus.

become interchangeable items. And as the children come up step by step in NAI TALIM they learn to do things in such a way as to learn more and more from doing things. Purposefulness and direction gradually and spontaneously enter into the field of learning through doing. What little experience of Basic Education we have had, has shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that *the best way to love work is to learn through work*. When the spark of "learning" is drawn from the material of "doing" then it ignites the love of work in the mind of the boy and the girl. So if we would teach our children to approach work in the spirit of love, there is no other and better way than this, that we show them that knowledge lies buried in the heart of work. When we win that knowledge from the heart of work we win the soul of work. Then indeed shall we love work with all our heart and soul.

III

Material results we do want from work. When we ply the *charkeha* and let the shuttle fly on our looms we produce yarn and cloth. And we need all the yarn and the cloth we can produce by work. When we drive the plough and work with all the other fascinating instruments in a farm we produce grains, fruits and vegetables and a variety of crops. And all these we need as much as we can produce by our work. But if we are to inculcate the real love of all such work, then it will not do to teach these to our children in a merely mechanical way. The *charkeha*, the loom, and the plough are not only machines. Each of them is truly a piece of history. Each of them is a living and growing thing. They have all lived and grown and changed with us. How much history, how much science they symbolise! Even as our boys and girls learn to know them and work with them, we should reveal to them all that history and all that science. We shall then have to further reveal how this history and this science embedded in them are entwined with many other pieces of history and science in the environment. History and science will then no longer be "bookish" but living and glowing realities. The *charkeha*, the loom, and the plough will link themselves almost interminably with ever-widening circles of facts and works. They will not be merely certain instruments for producing certain material

results. They will become educators. And what we learn from them in this manner will make us produce better and more efficiently what they produced before. The *charkha*, the loom, and the plough are only illustrations. These illustrations can be easily multiplied. But the truth of truths in regard to this matter is that our world is enriched both materially and spiritually when we spin and when we weave and when we plough and when we do all such other things in such a manner that we win from such work the knowledge we need to enrich our minds. The progeny of love is always better than the progeny of lust. This is most true of our approach to work. This then is the central fact upon which NAI TALIM is founded and reared.

From the start children in Basic Schools are so placed as to develop love for work. There is no more ridiculous conception than that work in Basic Schools is a kind of sweated labour. It would be so if such work is mechanical. And yet so much mechanical work in ordinary schools escapes the calumny that it is sweated labour because a wall of books and note-books hide the fact. It is on the other hand exactly the contrary in Basic Education. Children are guided to do such work as they can in such a manner that they discover "learning" in it. Doing and learning become one joint process and thus "doing" ceases to be a drudgery and "learning" is no longer unreal or frustrating. As children learn to love work, they will learn to derive "learning" from work and thus do work better and better. They will thus receive from work all the spiritual and material gifts it can so richly give. This is Basic Education, education through work, education in and by the love of work. Such education will enter into the very blood and love of the boy and the girl, making them live vitally, fully and consciously for themselves and for society. Since all real work has necessarily to be environmental, education through such work becomes a luminous bond between boys and girls on the one hand and all the realities in their environment on the other. Our boys and girls will no longer become aliens in their environment as they so much tend to do under the present system of education. On the contrary, under Basic Education they will fix their roots well into their soil, and being capable of drawing up all the nourishment in that • soil, they will in turn enrich the life of their country beyond anything we can dream of today.

Basic Education is intended for the seven years between the

ages of seven and fourteen. When it puts down roots into the lives of younger children from two and a half to seven years of age it becomes Pre-Basic Education. When it throws up branches into the lives of those above fourteen years of age it becomes Post-Basic and Adult Education. But throughout from "the cradle to the grave" education is primarily through activity and work. The whole of such education is what has today become NAI TALIM.

In NAI TALIM therefore we thus stand on the threshold of a new era in education and therefore inevitably in our national life. In NAI TALIM we have the vision of a whole people, from children to adults, creating a new social order in which all must work for all. That means a non-violent social order in which co-operation will replace competition, peace will take the place of conflict and a healthy general level of well-being will appear where we have today overplenty at one end and bitter penury at the other. What a revolution that will be !



SOME FOLK-SONGS OF KASHMIR

By GURDIAL MALLIK

FOLK-SONGS are the first nursery rhymes of humanity. In them is contained the wonder of wisdom, which is born of the intoxication of imagination and ecstasy of intuition. They are the earliest records of man's vision of the world, visible as well as invisible.

And as the essence and idiom of childhood everywhere, East and West, is the same, similarly, in the folk-songs of various countries there is an emotional and intellectual identity. But as our age is far removed from the dawn when humanity in the cradle was learning the alphabets of expression, we often fail to perceive this golden thread of unity running all through the texture of folk literature.

The vagabond in me has taken me at intervals to out-of-the-way places, where man is still to be met with in his primal childlike intelligence and environment, without the trappings of the modern mechanised modes of life and letters. And I must confess that as I have listened to his stories and his songs, specially the latter, I have been reinforced in my faith in the invisible existence of a fundamental fund of vision and wisdom, of which later-day literature, in spite of its dazzling diversity, is but an ever-revised edition, though ornate and enlarged.

This truth was brought home to me, once again, in the summer of 1945, when—thanks to the gracious hospitality of an esteemed friend and his affectionate family—for a number of weeks I was enabled to stay on the heights of the Himalayas. A part of the holiday was spent in Gulmarg. It was there that from the lips of the *dandiwallas* (bearers of a kind of wooden seat, slung across poles and used by invalids and old and the very young persons to negotiate steep ascents) who hail annually from the heart of Tibet, off and on, I heard the folk-songs, which I have rendered below into English with as much truthfulness to the text and tenor of the original as possible. My only regret is that I am unable to give any idea of the tunes, not only because it is impossible to capture music in any other medium except its own melody, but also because I am not acquainted even with the elements of technique. One has to hear the song to be wafted on its wings to a region of consciousness, where words are out of place ; nay, where even thought itself is an encumbrance and an inhibition. My only hope is that these translations, though bare,

may, like the bare hills, yet point finger-like to the Supreme Truth of Life.

Seek, O Man, the constant companionship of God.

Entreat Him every day with tears in thy eyes for the gift and grace of His fellowship.

This variedly colourful creation of His is an ever-present prompting to thee to prefer thy petition to Him for His perpetual presence, as it is an ever-standing invitation to thee to attend His banquet of beauty.

Seek, then, O Man, the constant companionship of God.

When the seeker of God sees Him, he is drunk with the wine of wonder. And in the ecstasy of intoxication everything in the universe—from the humble blade of grass to the glorious blue heavens—appears before him apparelled in vesture of virginal beauty. Nay, everything then bursts into song to contribute its part to an ineffable symphony, the strains of which he hears with the ears of his soul.

O Man, become, then, a seeker of God.

God created man and afterwards the latter multiplied million-fold. And they all owed allegiance as slaves to Him.

Then, one day, there arose among them one who, shaking off his shackles and sheaths of slavery, stood on the open road and exclaimed, "I am God."

At once the priest, the pundit and the potentate, being disturbed in their dope-like self-complacency, conspired to consign the rebel against the accepted article of faith to the gallows.

And before long the lover, who in the abundance and ecstasy of his love for God had called himself His equal, was crucified amidst the shouts and sneers of the multitude.

But lo ! no sooner had the body of the beloved of God been reduced to dust than from its millions of particles there blossomed

forth fragrant flowers. And their fragrance maddened and moulded every one of those who had assembled to witness the execution into a lover of God !

Every day at dawn after self-ablution in the sea of silence and self-effacement, dwell, O man, in a spirit of devotion on the glory, goodness and grace of God.

If thou dost so, then before long thou wilt witness a wonder beyond compare : the earth will become an altar, every tree a type of divinity, and every stone a scripture.

Thus, O pilgrim, wilt thy pilgrimage to Him be perfect and thy paean of praise of His person pure and profound.

Every one in this vast world, O man, dwells within the domain of God's grace.

The manifold differences in form and in faith are but the windows through which the sun of His grace streams forth ceaselessly. They are so many strings of His musical instrument.

Every one, therefore, O man, is an aspirant for His grace, though only the elect wear the apparel and insignia of acceptance at His hands.

Salutations to thee, O Man !

"Peace be with thee !" This is the prayer which wells up every day from the depths of my heart for thee.

For hourly do I see thee at war with forces and feelings, that are beyond thy imagination and understanding,—far more outside the ambit of thy overcoming.

And yet I assure thee, on the testimony of the stars, which have whispered the secret into my ears when the world has been asleep, that in the end victory shall be thine and Peace shall descend on thy head like parental blessing.

Salutations to thee, O Man !

Day and night there burns within me an inextinguishable blaze of fire. It is a ringing reminder to me that I have not as yet fulfilled the mission on which God sent me, aeons ago, to this earth.

The Day of Reckoning draws near. While those who have carried out His behests will be admitted into His audience-hall, only I shall be asked to shiver with cold in the outer court. Fie upon me !

My refuge and recommendation, then, will be my faith in God's grace,—the grace that shines in the shadow of His feet.

Age after age I have carried in my heart a secret sorrow. But the pain of it is so precious that I have all along refused to part with it for the wealth of the whole world.

It is the sorrow of my separation from God. It acts as a tonic for my soul. For, the thought that I have not as yet met Him helps me keep His memory ever fresh and fragrant.

And so my treasure of tears, though it crucifies me, yet puts to shame the treasures of Croesus.



GANDHIJĪ'S THEORY OF TRUSTEESHIP

By NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

CRITICISM OF THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS

DURING the opening ceremony of the Benares Hindu University Gandhiji delivered a speech on the 4th of February, 1916, in course of which he said :

I now introduce you to another scene. His Highness the Maharajah, who presided over our deliberations, spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in the great pandal in which the foundation ceremony was performed by the Viceroy ? Certainly a most gorgeous show, an exhibition of jewellery which made a feast for the eyes of the greatest jeweller who chose to come from Paris. I compare with the richly bedecked noblemen the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying to those noblemen : "There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of the jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India. . . . Sir, whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city in British India or be it in the India which is ruled by our great chiefs, I become jealous at once and I say : "Oh, it is the money that has come from the agriculturists." Over 75% of the population are agriculturists and Mr. Higginbotham told us last night in his own felicitous language that they are the men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour. Our salvation can only come through the farmer. Neither the lawyers, nor doctors, nor the rich landlords are going to secure it" (Natesan, *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 4th edition, p. 322).

While addressing a body of students in Benares once more in 1927, Gandhiji said :

Panditji has collected and has been collecting lakhs of rupees for you from Rajas and Maharajas. The money apparently comes from the wealthy princes, but in reality it comes from the millions of our poor. The education that you receive today is thus paid for by the starving villagers who will never have the chance of such education. It is your duty to refuse to have an education that is not within the reach of the poor ; but I do not ask that of you today. I ask you to render a slight return to the poor by doing a little *yajna* for them.

For he who eats without doing his *yajna* steals his food, says the Gita. The *yajna* of our age and for us is the spinning wheel. Day in and day out I have been talking about it, writing about it (*Young India*, 20. 1, 27).

Gandhiji's charges against present arrangements in society are based on the fact that they are built upon the exploitation of the toiling millions. The latter are not only degraded by their poverty, but society loses in a different way also. In 1937, when the Congress decided to accept office, Gandhiji wrote by way of advice :

Riches have not yet been sufficiently taxed. In this of all countries in the world, possession of inordinate wealth by individuals should be held as a crime against Indian humanity. Therefore the maximum limit of taxation of riches beyond a certain margin can never be reached. In England, I understand, they have already gone as far as 70% of the earnings beyond a prescribed figure. There is no reason why India should not go to a much higher figure. Why should there not be death duties ? Those sons of millionaires who are of age and yet inherit their parents' wealth are losers for the very inheritance. The nation thus becomes a double loser. *For the inheritance should rightly belong to the nation.** And the nation loses in that the full faculties of the heirs are not drawn out, being crushed under the load of riches (*Harijan*, 31.7.37).

In a similar vein he wrote on the eve of the Salt Satyagraha in 1930 :

The greatest obstacle in the path of non-violence is the presence in our midst of the indigenous interests that have sprung up from British rule, the interests of monied men, speculators, scrip holders, landholders, factory owners and the like. All these do not always realise that they are living on the blood of the masses, and when they do, they become as callous as the British principals whose tools and agents they are. If, like the Japanese Samurai, they could but realise that they must give up their blood-stained gains, the battle is won for non-violence. It must not be difficult for them to see that the holding of millions is a crime when millions of their own kith and kin are starving and therefore they must give up their agency. No principal has yet been found able to work without faithful agents.

But non-violence has to be patient with these as with the British principal. The aim of the non-violent worker must ever be to convert (*Young India*, 6.2. 30).

* Italics are the compiler's.

The callousness of the upper classes has often pained Gandhiji deeply, yet he has been sparing in his references to them. But there have been occasions when he has flared up and given expression to his feelings. For instance, during the celebrated trial of 1922, he said :

Little do the town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history (*Young India*, 23, 3, 22).

Similarly in answer to a correspondent, he wrote :

What does the correspondent mean when he refers to the "lower orders who know no responsibility and can anyway make both ends meet" ? Is he sure that the "lower orders know no responsibility" ? Have they no feelings, are they not injured by an angry word ? In what sense are they lower except in their poverty for which we middle classes are responsible ? And may I inform my correspondent that the "lower orders" not only do not "make the two ends meet" but the majority of them are living in a state of semi-starvation ? If the middle class people voluntarily suffer losses for the sake of the "lower classes" it would be but a tardy reparation for their participation in their exploitation. I invite the correspondent to think in terms of the masses and identify himself with his less fortunate countrymen (*Young India*, 17, 7, 24).

IDEAL DISTRIBUTION

The question however is : what should be the nature of an ideal society ? What should be its property relations and what about the income of people ?

In the year 1904, Gandhiji imbibed from Ruskin the idea that

A lawyer's work has the same value as a barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work (*Autobiography*, p. 365).

Ever since that time, he has held that wages derived from all forms of productive labour ought to be equal (*Harijan*, 6. 7. 35). But realising the practical difficulties, he wrote :

My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realised. I therefore work for equitable distribution (*Young India*, 17. 3. 27).

Before we proceed any further, it may be interesting to discuss one point, first of all, viz. what is then the difference between Socialism and Gandhism ?

GANDHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM

In reply to a Socialist's question, Gandhiji wrote in 1940 :

If I can convert the country to my point of view, the social order of the future will be based predominantly on the charkha and all it implies. It will include everything that promotes the well-being of the villagers. It will not exclude the industries mentioned by my correspondent so long as they do not smother the villages and village life. I do visualise electricity, ship-building, iron works, machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reversed. Hitherto the industrialisation has been so planned as to destroy the villages and village crafts. In the State of the future it will subserve the villages and their crafts. I do not share the socialist belief that centralisation of the necessities of life will conduce to the common welfare, when the centralised industries are planned and owned by the State. The socialistic conception of the West was born in an environment reeking with violence. The motive lying behind the Western type and the Eastern is the same—the greatest welfare of the whole society and the abolition of the hideous inequalities resulting in the existence of millions of have-nots and a handful of haves. I believe that this end can be achieved only when non-violence is accepted by the best mind of the world as the basis on which a just social order is to be constructed. I hold that the coming into power of the proletariat through violence is bound to fail in the end. What is gained by violence must be lost before superior violence (*Harijan*, 27. 1. 40).

Commenting further on the difference, he said :

I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise

against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately, Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means non-violent non-co-operation.

Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation (*Harijan*, 20. 4. 40).

In 1928 he had similarly stated that although the ultimate ideal was common between him and the Bolshevik Party, yet the difference lay principally in the means ; and the difference is great, inasmuch as it is the same as the difference between violence and non-violence.

Q. What is your opinion about the social economics of Bolshevism, and how far do you think they are fit to be copied by our country ?

A. I must confess that I have not yet been able fully to understand the meaning of Bolshevism. All that I know is that it aims at the abolition of private property. This is only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics, and *if people adopted this ideal of their own accord, or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion*, there would be nothing like it. But from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force, but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime, in its present form, cannot last for long. *For, it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence.* But be that as it may, there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain ; the noble example of their renunciation will be embleazoned for ever, and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes (*Young India*, 15. 11. 28).

... ..

Violence is no monopoly of any one party. I know Congress-

men who are neither socialists nor communists but who are frankly devotees of the cult of violence. Contrariwise, I know socialists and communists who will not hurt a fly but who believe in the universal ownership of instruments of production. I rank myself as one among them (*Harijan*, 10. 12. 38).

Some young communists questioned him in London as to how he actually proposed to bring about the new order if he abjured the use of violence. Was it to be by persuasion alone? In answer he said :

Not merely by verbal persuasion. I will concentrate on my means. Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary—a non-violent revolutionary. My means are non-co-operation. No person can amass wealth without the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people concerned (*Young India*, 26. 11. 31).

In course of the same interview, he said :

The masses do not see in landlords and other profiteers their enemy. But the consciousness of the wrong done to them by these classes has to be created in them. I do not teach the masses to regard the capitalists as their enemies, but I teach them that they are their own enemies.

But what does this mean? Why should we not, like the socialists, look upon all exploiters as the enemies of mankind? Gandhiji's answer is as follows, and the careful reader will notice how his attitude ultimately springs from the creed of non-violence. As President of the Kathiawad Political Conference in 1924, he had said :

The popular saying, as is the king, so are the people, is only a half-truth. It is not more true than its converse, as are the people, so is the prince. Where the subjects are overtaken by sleepy indifference, there is every possibility that the prince will cease to function as a protector, and become an oppressor instead. Those who are not wide awake, have no right to blame their prince.

To understand this principle is not to be impatient, not to reproach Fate, not to blame others. He who understands this doctrine of self-help, blames himself for failure. *It is on this ground that I object to violence.* If we blame others, where we should blame ourselves, and wish for or bring about their destruction, that does not remove the root cause of the disease which, on the contrary, sinks all the deeper for the ignorance thereof (*Young India*, 8.1.25).

This was explained more fully later on thus :

It is because the rulers, if they are bad, are so, not necessarily or wholly by birth, but largely because of their environment, that I have hopes of their altering their course. It is perfectly true that the rulers cannot alter their course themselves. If they are dominated by their environment, they do not surely deserve to be killed but should be changed by a change of environment. But the environment are we—the people who make the rulers what they are. They are thus an exaggerated edition of what we are in the aggregate. If my argument is sound, any violence done to the rulers would be violence done to ourselves. It would be suicide. And since I do not want to commit suicide, nor encourage my neighbours to do so, I become non-violent myself and invite my neighbours to do likewise.

Moreover, violence may destroy one or more bad rulers, but like Ravana's heads, others will pop up in their places, for the root lies elsewhere. It lies in us. If we reform ourselves, the rulers will automatically do so (*Harijan*, 21. 9. 34).

Those who seek to destroy men rather than manners, adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men. They do not know the root of the evil (*Young India*, 17. 3. 27).

IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC EQUALITY

The essential difference between Socialism and Gandhism (or as Gandhiji himself has put it, Socialism of the Western and Eastern type) lies therefore in the means adopted for achieving the goal. All other differences are traceable to the original difference between violence and non-violence. The means being thus opposite to one another, a dissimilarity has also crept into the nature of the ideal. It has already been hinted that non-violent organization can flourish only under decentralization. But besides this, there is another important point of difference between Socialism and Gandhism. Let us examine where this distinction lies.

Unlike many socialists, but like some of them, such as Bernard Shaw, Gandhiji holds equality of income to be the corner-stone of an ideal social order. He referred to economic equality in the pamphlet on the *Constructive Programme* as "the master-key to non-violent independence". Explaining its implications in the *Harijan* of 25. 8. 40, he wrote :

The real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his *natural wants* and no more. For example, if one man has a weak digestion and requires only a quarter of a pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, both should be in a position to satisfy their wants. To bring this ideal into being the entire social order has got to be reconstructed. A society based on non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. We may not perhaps be able to realise the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it. To the same extent as we progress towards our goal we shall find contentment and happiness, and to that extent too shall we have contributed towards the bringing into being of a non-violent society.

...

Now let us consider how equal distribution can be brought about through non-violence. The first step towards it for him who has made this ideal part of his being is to bring about the necessary changes in his personal life. He would reduce his wants to a minimum, bearing in mind the poverty of India. His earnings would be free of dishonesty. The desire for speculation would be renounced. His habitation would be in keeping with his new mode of life. There would be self-restraint exercised in every sphere of life. *When he has done all that is possible in his own life, then only will he be in a position to preach this ideal among his associates and neighbours.*

Indeed at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must lie that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for superfluous wealth possessed by them. *For according to the doctrine they may not possess a rupee more than their neighbours.* How is this to be brought about? Non-violently? Or should the wealthy be dispossessed of their possessions? To do this we would naturally have to resort to violence. This violent action cannot benefit society. Society will be the poorer, for it will lose the gifts of a man who knows how to accumulate wealth. Therefore the non-violent way is evidently superior. The rich man will be left in possession of his wealth, of which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for the society. In this argument, honesty on the part of the trustee is assumed.

...

If, however, in spite of the utmost effort, the rich do not become guardians of the poor in the true sense of the term and the latter are more and more crushed and die of hunger, what is to be done? In trying to find out the solution of this riddle I have lighted on non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means. The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the

co-operation of the poor in society If this knowledge were to penetrate to and spread amongst the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of non-violence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation (*Harijan*, 25. 8. 40).

A few months earlier, he had written :

A nationalist zamindar will try to live like a non-zamindar. He will regard his tenants as his co-proprietors : in other words, he will hold his zamindari in trust for his tenants taking a moderate commission for the use of his labours and capital (*Harijan*, 27.4.40).

... ..

Similarly in answer to a question he had once replied :

I do not want to destroy the zamindar, neither do I feel the zamindar is inevitable.

Q. Your actual economic policy would differ from Nehru's ? He, so far as I understand him, would wipe out the zamindar.

A. Yes, we seem to differ in our ideas of village uplift and reconstruction. The difference is of emphasis. He does not mind the village uplift movement. He believes in industrialization ; I have grave doubt about its usefulness for India. He believes in the ultimate inevitability of class conflict though he would avoid it if he could. I expect to convert the zamindars and other capitalists by the non-violent method, and therefore there is for me nothing like an inevitability of class conflict. For it is an essential part of non-violence to go along the line of least resistance. The moment the cultivators of the soil realize their power, the zamindari evil will be sterilized. What can the poor zamindar do when they say that they will simply not work the land unless they are paid enough to feed and clothe and educate themselves and their children in a decent manner ? In reality the toiler is the owner of what he produces. If the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power. That is how I do not see the necessity of class conflict. If I thought it inevitable I should not hesitate to preach it and teach it (*Harijan*, 5. 12. 36).

... ..

Exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires, but by removing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to non-co-operate with their exploiters. This will convert the exploiters also. I have even suggested that ultimately it will lead to both being equal partners. Capital as such

is not evil ; it is the wrong use that is evil. Capital in some form or other will always be needed (*Harijan*, 28. 7. 40).

IS IT CLASS COLLABORATION ?

Now this raises a very important and knotty question. Does Gandhiji stand by existing property relations ? Does he aim at class collaboration ? His earlier writings do lend some colour to such a view. In 1931, he had said :

Q. If you will benefit the worker, the peasant and the factory-hand, can you avoid class-war ?

A. I can most decidedly, if only the people will follow the non-violent method. By the non-violent method, we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. We invite the capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital. *Nor need the worker wait for his conversion.* If capital is power, so is work. Either power can be used destructively or creatively. Either is dependent on the other. Immediately the worker realises his strength, he is in a position to become a co-sharer with the capitalist instead of remaining his slave (*Young India*, 26. 3. 31).

Similarly he wrote in 1937 :

A labourer's skill is his capital. Just as the capitalist cannot make his capital fructify without the co-operation of labour, even so the working man cannot make his labour fructify without the co-operation of capital. And if both labour and capital have the gift of intelligence equally developed in them and have confidence in their capacity to secure a fair deal, each at the hands of the other, they would get to respect and appreciate each other as equal partners in a common enterprise (*Harijan* 3. 7. 37).

In spite of thus aiming at 'equal' or 'just' relations between capital and labour, for the time being, we can find out what lies at the back of Gandhiji's mind, for that makes itself felt in his writings every now and then. Thus in 1924, he wrote :

The village work frightens us. We who are town-bred find it trying to take to village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life. But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically, if our desire is to establish Swaraj for the people, not to substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse. Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live.

The difference will be fundamental. The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation. Let us not flinch from the necessary sacrifice, if we will live as an independent self-respecting nation (*Young India*, 17. 4. 24).

Referring to zamindars and talukdars, he wrote in 1929 :

They must regard themselves, even as the Japanese nobles did, as trustees holding their wealth for the good of their wards, the ryots. Then they would take no more than a reasonable amount as commission for their labours. At present there is no proportion between the wholly unnecessary pomp and extravagance of the moneyed classes and the grinding pauperism of the ryots in whose midst the former are living. A model zamindar would therefore at once reduce much of the burden the ryot is now bearing, he would come in intimate touch with the ryots and know their wants and inject hope into them in place of the despair which is killing the very life out of them. He will not be satisfied with the ryot's ignorance of the laws of sanitation and hygiene. He would reduce himself to poverty in order that the ryot may have the necessaries of life. He will study the economic condition of the ryots under his care, establish schools in which he will educate his own children side by side with those of the ryots. He will purify the village well and the village tank. He will teach the ryot to sweep his roads and clean his latrines by himself doing this necessary labour. He will throw open without reserve his own gardens for the unrestricted use of the ryot. He will use as hospital, school, or the like most of the unnecessary buildings which he keeps for his pleasure. If only the capitalist class will read the sign of the times, revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time the seven hundred thousand dung-heaps, which today pass muster as villages, can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort. I am convinced that the capitalist, if he follows the Samurai of Japan, has nothing really to lose and everything to gain. There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of the real happiness of all on the one hand, and on the other the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, awakened but ignorant, famishing millions will plunge the country and which not even the armed force that a powerful Government can bring into play can avert (*Young India*, 5. 12. 29).

In 1942, he wrote :

The rich should ponder well as to what is their duty today.... The monied classes have got to learn how to fight either with arms or the weapon of non-violence. For those who wish to follow the latter way the best and most effective *mantram* is तेन व्यक्तेन मुञ्जिथाः (Enjoy thy wealth by renouncing it). Expanded it means : Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours ; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs and use the remainder for society.

... ..

But I have visions that the end of this war will mean also the end of the rule of capital. I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence (*Harijan*, 1. 2. 42).

A NEW IMPLICATION OF TRUSTEESHIP

Shortly after the article quoted above was written, Shri Shankerrao Deo questioned Gandhiji :

Q. Why first earn crores and then use them for society ? As society today is constituted the means of earning crores are bound to be impure ; and one who earns crores by impure means cannot be expected to follow the *mantram* तेन व्यक्तेन मुञ्जिथाः ; because in the very process of earning crores by impure means the man's character is bound to be tainted or vitiated.

Gandhiji proceeded, in course of the following weeks, to develop the implications of non-violence and trusteeship in fuller measure. He first said in answer to Shri Shankerrao :

In the application of the method of non-violence one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment (*Harijan*, 22. 2. 42).

He also said :

But I accept the proposition that it is better not to desire wealth than to acquire it and become a trustee. I gave up my own long ago, which should be proof enough of what I would like others to do. But what am I to advise those who are already wealthy or who would not shed the desire for wealth ? I can only say to them that they should use their wealth for service.

Personally I do not believe in inherited riches. The well-to-do should educate and bring up their children so that they may learn how to be independent. The tragedy is that they do not do so. Their children get some education, they even recite verses in praise of poverty, but they have no compunction about helping themselves to parental wealth. That being so, I exercise my common sense and advise what is practicable (*Harijan*, 8. 3. 42).

Someone asked him the following question next month :

Q. From your writings one gathers the notion that your "trustee" is not anything more than a very benevolent philanthropist and donor, such as the first Parsi Baronet, the Tatas, the Wadias, the Birlas, Shri Bajaj and the like. Is that so ? Will you please explain whom you regard as the the primary or rightful beneficiaries of the possessions of a rich man ? Is there to be a limit to the amount or part of the income and capital which he can spend upon himself, his kith and kin and for non-public purposes ? Can one who exceeds such limit be prevented from doing so ? If he is incompetent or otherwise fails to discharge his obligations as a trustee, can he be removed and called upon to render accounts by a beneficiary or the State ? Do the same principles apply to princes and zamindars, or is their trusteeship of a different nature ?

A. If the trusteeship idea catches, philanthropy, as we know it, will disappear. Of those you have named only Jamnalalji came near, but only near, it. *A trustee has no heir but the public.* In a State built on the basis of non-violence, the commission of trustees will be regulated. Princes and zamindars will be on a par with other men of wealth (*Harijan*, 12. 4. 42).

Similarly in 1934 he had said :

Q. Suppose an artist leaves certain pictures to a son who does not appreciate their value for the nation and sells them or wastes them so that the nation stands to lose something precious through one man's folly. If you are assured that the son would never be a trustee in the sense in which you would like to have him, do you not think the State would be justified in taking away those articles from him with the minimum use of violence ?

A. Yes, the State will, as a matter of fact, take away those things and I believe it will be justified if it uses the minimum of violence. But the fear is always there that the State may use too much violence against those who differ from it. I would be very happy indeed if the people concerned behaved as trustees, but if they fail, I believe we shall have to deprive them of their possessions

through the State with the minimum exercise of violence. That is why I said at the Round Table Conference that every vested interest must be subject to scrutiny and confiscation ordered where necessary—with or without compensation as the case demanded.

What I would personally prefer would be not a centralization of power in the hands of the State, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship, as in my opinion the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State.

It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time. The State represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from the violence to which it owes its very existence. Hence I prefer the doctrine of trusteeship (*Studies in Gandhism*, p. 43).

Gandhiji would allow talented people to earn more than others, if otherwise their talents are likely to be stifled.

But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father goes to the common family fund (*Young India*, 26. 11 31).

We have also seen how private ownership will be without its present support in the form of the law of inheritance. That one step would, in fact, knock the base completely out of capitalism.

Gandhiji thus wishes to bring about as equal a distribution as possible through the developed consciousness and non-violent strength of the toilers in the fields and factories rather than through the arm of the State.

The present inequalities are surely due to the people's ignorance. With a growing knowledge of their natural strength, the inequalities must disappear. If the revolution is brought about by violence the position will be reversed, but not altered for the better. With non-violence, i. e. conversion, the new era which people hope for must be born. My approach and appeal are in terms of non-violence pure and undefiled. The French have a noble motto in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. It is a heritage not for the French only but for all mankind.

What the French never realised, it is open to us to do. Will the princes and the princely landholders and merchants take the lead ? It is for them to take the lead, not for the "have-nots", who have nothing to share with anybody except their pauperism and abject-

ness. I am addressing weekly appeals to the British Power. They are made exactly in the same friendly spirit as this is. The British may not respond. If the "haves", who are in fact the pillars on which the mighty British Power rests, can realise their obvious duty, the British Power must yield. *It was because I had despaired of response from the pillars, that I have thought of moving the masses on whom the pillars rest.* I may not leave a single stone unturned to avoid what is undoubtedly a great risk. Hence this appeal (*Harijan*, 2. 8. 42).

It will be abundantly clear from the passages cited above what kind of equality Gandhiji wishes to bring about through his theory of trusteeship, how he wishes to do so through the organised strength of the masses, and how again he depends on conversion instead of coercion for bringing about permanent social change. In his ideal society, complete equality of opportunity will be assured to every human being. Natural inequalities will, of course, remain till the end of time, and will be suppressed on no account. But they will not be made the ground for the creation of a privileged or leisured class through the existing law of inheritance. Inheritance shall belong to the community alone.

But when equality of opportunity has been secured, shall we have nothing more to do with the theory of trusteeship? Gandhiji does not think so. Talents will still be there; and Gandhiji will then wish all talented persons to hold their talents in trust for society, just as he wishes them to hold their inherited or personally acquired riches in trust today. That is why he said that in the future society of his conception, no

person, whether prince or princely zamindar or merchant, can be the sole owner or disposer of possessions, *hereditary or self-acquired*. Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation, or, say, the social structure surrounding him. Therefore, he can use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives" (*Harijan* 2. 8. 42).

In other words, talents will be socialized as the means of production of the elementary necessities of life ought to be; and this socialization should be brought about by organized non-violence. As such the theory of trusteeship has a permanent value in human

society. Rebutting the charge that he was a friend of capitalists, Gandhiji said :

I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me. They know that I desire to end capitalism, almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced Socialist or even Communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ. My theory of "trusteeship" is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. No other theory is compatible with non-violence (*Harijan*, 16. 12. 39).

The final aim of the Gandhian theory of trusteeship is thus not class collaboration, but class liquidation, as a friend of mine once very happily put it. This liquidation will be effected not by the suppression of the exploiters by the exploited, but by a change of heart brought about among the exploiters by the non-violent non-cooperation of the exploited ; who, in their turn, will also become purified in course of the struggle from the weaknesses which have made the present social inequalities possible. Under the new constitution of things, brought about by the joint endeavour of today's hostile classes, all men will live as servants of the community, willingly and joyfully, through a complete reorientation of life's values in a new direction. Society will also, in its turn, assure to every man full opportunity for the development of his physical, mental and moral powers, without allowing him to restrict similar opportunity in others. And the product of those talents will be shared by all in common.

PENALTIES UPON OPINION

By SUKUMAR HALDAR

Nor many educated Indians have heard of George Jacob Holyoake, a mid-Victorian Englishman, who braved imprisonment in fighting for liberty of speech. He was born at Birmingham on April 13, 1817, was educated at the Mechanics' Institution in that town, and was later appointed as teacher of Mathematics to that institution. For some-time he worked in a foundry. He imbibed early the spirit of liberty and in 1846 he was awarded the five prizes offered by Independent Order of Odd Fellows for five new Degree lectures upon Knowledge, Charity, Justice, Science, and Progress. He was acting Secretary of the British Legion sent out to Garibaldi. He was the founder of "Secularism", a system which, according to him, "bases duty on considerations purely human, relies on material means of improvement, justifying its beliefs to the conscience, irrespective of Atheism, Theism, or Revelation."

At an early age Holyoake came under the influence of Robert Owen. He was described in the *Review of Reviews* for September, 1901, as the Grand Old Man of the Co-operative Movement in Britain, disciple of Robert Owen, and founder of Modern Secularism. It was after lecturing in support of Owen's doctrine at Cheltenham that a local preacher rose, and remarked that the lecturer had a great deal to say of duty towards man, but nothing of duty towards God. Holyoake replied: "In our proposed industrial colonies all were free to erect as many churches as they pleased, but that it was bad political economy to expend money that way, seeing the distressed condition in which the people then were." The lecturer was thereupon arrested, locked up in a cell with drunks and disorderlies, brought before the magistrates, committed for trial for felony, found guilty, after defending himself in a speech that lasted nine hours and a quarter, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. On being arrested he was handcuffed in shackles which were too small for his wrists, and marched off nine miles across country to Gloucester prison with two policemen. He was made to walk handcuffed through the streets, first of Cheltenham and then of Gloucester, like a common felon. When he was committed for trial he could have been liberated on bail if he would enter into and swear to his own recognizances for £ 100. He refused to take the oath and remained three weeks in

prison untried and was only liberated shortly before his trial in order that he might prepare his defence. In his address to the Judge and Jury of the Assize Court he was much more anxious to vindicate the right of free speech than to secure his own acquittal, and the result was that he attained the object which he desired, at the cost of his own liberty. Writing about his own prison life he has said : "A prison is a place of organised brutality and is so intended. For the Chaplain to speak of Divine love there is not to understand his business. A single humane act does more to spiritualise a man than a thousand exhortations without it." He has expressed the view that every Home Secretary ought to be imprisoned before taking office.

So far was the imprisonment from breaking his spirit, that no sooner was he at large than he went back to Cheltenham and repeated on a public platform the very words for the utterance of which he had just served his term of imprisonment. He was not again prosecuted.

During his incarceration his little daughter died of fever brought on by privation. The family was maintained with difficulty by precarious subscriptions sent intermittently which seldom amounted to ten shillings a week. A few days before the fever took the child, her mother was carrying her through Bull Street, Birmingham, when she cried from hunger for a bun in a window. There was no penny to buy it and the frenzied mother slapped the child to quiet her. She never forgave herself for doing that. Forty years later she often repeated the last words of the child on the night of her death, when she exclaimed that he was coming to see her—repeated them in the tones of the child which went into the mother's heart for evermore.

Holyoake was the first to apply the term "Jingo" to a section of the Conservative Party. We are told by Mr. Stead : "It was in 1878, just after Mr. Gladstone's windows had been smashed by the Jingo mob which was clamouring for war with Russia in defence of Constantinople, that Mr. Holyoake wrote a letter to the *Daily News* in which he applied the epithet that has stuck like a burr to all those unfortunates who confused drunken arrogance with patriotic pride and imagined that they had discharged their duties both of peace and war by loud-mouthed asseveration that they did not want to fight, but by Jingo ! if they did they had everything necessary for fighting to the finish."

Holyoake's career is strewn with instances in which he did

yeoman service in the cause of free speech, both on the platform and in the press. He had worked hard to obtain remission of taxation and reduction of duties for the poorer classes and had done many pieces of good, unobtrusive work. He fought zealously against taxation of newspapers. He took a leading part in the fight which led to the recognition of a solemn affirmation as an alternative to an oath. He had been faithful throughout to his avowed belief that more was to be gained by argument than by denunciation, more by explanation than by condemnation.

Holyoake was remarkable for his perennial youth. Mr. Stead wrote of him in 1891 when he was in his 85th year : "Mr. Holyoake, although in his 85th year, continues to travel about in the country delivering lectures, addressing meetings, and generally displaying an activity which is miraculous in a man of his age. I asked him if he could indicate to the readers of the *Review* the secret of his marvellous vitality. He said : 'It is very simple. I have been moderate in all things, moderate even in moderation. I have been moderate in living and I show certainly no immoderate speed in hastening towards my grave.' He is not an anti-tobacconist. He is not a teetotaller. He is moderate in everything." He lived to the age of 89 and died in 1906. Mr. Stead further wrote : "When Mr. Gladstone pressed upon him the acceptance of a pension, he refused it on the ground that his means sufficed for his simple wants and he did not feel that it would be right or consistent for him as an old reformer to be chargeable upon the taxes."

Holyoake had gone through countless adventures in the world of free-thought, politics and the working class Co-operative Movements and never lost his engaging good humour. A pleasant example of his wit was the remark made by him in the "Agnostic Annual" for 1903 : "If the reader notices in my book entitled 'Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life' how many of my friends have been imprisoned, he will think he has fallen into dangerous hands. All counted, they may be thirty in number. But this only proves that within the memory of living men the path of political and other pilgrims lay by castles of ghouls, who seized them by the way."

Writing about the great services of Holyoake to the cause of free-thought, Mr. Joseph McCabe has stated in the "Life and Letters of George Jacob Holyoake" : "It was the growth of scientific culture

and historical criticism and the spread of education that had so disintegrating an effect on the earlier religious beliefs. Holyoake's work was to popularise this advanced knowledge. Rationalists generally will probably claim two outstanding services for him in this department. From 1842 until 1860 he was the acknowledged leader of free-thinkers in this country, and the vast amount of educative and organising work done in that difficult period was overwhelmingly due to him. He founded the National Secular Society. Mr. Bradlaugh named it and developed it. In the next twenty years his great service was his stern insistence that there should be no criticism without character, culture, taste, and consideration for others. He failed in the specific aim he had before him, but he kept that ideal intact, until a new organisation was ready to embody it. These, and the splendid fight he waged for free speech, the sacrifices he made for honour and truth, the securing of the option to affirm instead of swearing, the vindication in his own fine character of the humanist morality, are the great services he rendered to his agnostic followers."

Mention may be made here of Richard Carlisle, free-thinker, who helped Holyoake during his trial and imprisonment for Atheism in 1842. Holyoake has in his "History of the Last Trial by Jury for Atheism" narrated the following incident: "Before my trial the same Mr. Jones (a magistrate who frequently visited Holyoake in Jail and tried to cure him of his atheism) told me that my friend Mr. Richard Carlisle had died in London a very horrible death recanting all his principles before he expired, and urged me to take warning by his example and to do the same. Shortly after, Mr. Jones was surprised to meet Mr. Carlisle in the corridor of the gaol bringing me refreshments, which his experience assured him I needed. And it was not the least part of my pride on the day of my trial that he sat near me from morning till night, encouraging me by his presence, and assisting me by his wisdom. After my conviction he vindicated me assiduously through the press, addressed to me public letters, and wrote to Justice Erskine and Sir Robert Peel, threatening to renew his former war against the Church if my situation was not ameliorated—a very curious species of recantation, it must be confessed, but a fair sample of the usual deathbed 'scenes' which the pulpits relate."

In the bitterness of his experience Holyoake wrote after his release from gaol: "Christians profess to draw men to Jesus with

cords of love, but were it not for their judicious foresight in telling us that they are 'cords of love' I guess that few would find it out."

Amongst his many interests that occupied his mind and his pen were the sorrows of India and of Ireland. His chief correspondent in India in the latter part of the nineteenth century was Mr. K. M. Chatterjee, Barrister-at-law and the Chief Judge of the Court of Small Causes in Calcutta. Indian problems came too late in life to be mastered by him. An Indian student, Rakhal Das Haldar, came in contact with Holyoake in London in 1861-62. In his "Life and Letters of George Jacob Holyoake", Mr. Joseph McCabe has quoted the following passage from a letter written by Holyoake to his friend John Stuart Mill: "I have a pleasant home here (Dymoke Lodge), surrounded by more than half an acre of plantation. Mr. Das Haldar, a Bengal gentleman, called it a Bungalow!" Mr. Haldar has written in his English diary under June 4, 1862:

To the Polytechnic Institution. The panorama of Japan; the cosmoramic views (including one of Calcutta), the diving bell, the magnificent and wonderful dissolving views of ancient and modern London. In the evening went, according to an invitation, to the philosophic retreat of Mr. G. J. Holyoake.—Dymoke Lodge. It is situated in Anglo-Indian fashion, i. e., the Bungalow surrounded by a compound and trees. The evening being very bright, I altogether fancied myself in Bengal in October. Mr. Holyoake's family is a pretty large one, he having several children. His eldest daughter is pretty looking. He showed me, after tea, a photograph of Garibaldi presented by the general himself with his autograph. An old full-length wooden statue of Voltaire, said to have been made when Voltaire was living. He then showed, while we were enjoying cigars (when I told him that I did smoke, his reply was that I had all the virtues of a—what?) a great many publications of his own. He has written more than I can conveniently read in three or four years. A beautifully written MS. by him of Euclid, the whole of which, he said, he knew by heart. He showed me the identical "Howitt's Corrected List of Prisoners at the Gloucester Jail" which he alludes to in his "Last Trial by Jury for Atheism." It is pasted on a scrap-book which contains all sorts of original scraps of newspapers, bills, etc., that appeared concerning him while he was imprisoned. He showed me a copy of Pearson's work on Infidelity published at 10s. 6d. per copy which he caused to be sold at 1s. 6d., and so 4000 copies were distributed; he then wrote against it, and no new edition has appeared since. He has a collection of many hundreds of rare pamphlets chiefly relating to theology. (From the "English Diary of an Indian Student": Dacca, Ashutosh Library, 1903).

STORIES FROM "GALPA-SALPA"

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The Fairy

SAID KUSMI, "You tell a lot of made-up stories. Tell me a true story, won't you?"

"There are two sorts of stuff in the world," I said. "One is the True, and one is the Super-true. My business is with the Super-true."

"Dada-Mashai, everyone says that they can't understand what you say."

"That's true," I said, "but when they don't understand it's their own fault."

"What do you mean by Super-true? Do tell me."

"Well, this for example. Everyone knows that you are Kusmi. That's quite *true*; it can be proved a thousand times over. But I've discovered that you're a fairy from fairyland. And that is Super-true."

Kusmi was pleased. "Very good! How did you find out?"

Said I, "The other day you had an examination, and you were sitting on your bed learning your geography by heart; at last your head dropped on the pillow and you fell asleep. It was full moon night. Through the window the moonlight fell full on your face and on your sky-blue sari. Then I saw quite clearly that it was a messenger from the king of fairyland come for news of their runaway fairy. He came close to my window, his white scarf fluttered into the middle of the room. The messenger looked you up and down, but he didn't know whether you were their truant fairy or not. He thought perhaps you were a fairy of this world, and that it would be no easy job for them to carry you off from the lap of earth. It would be too weighty for them, in fact. Gradually the moon rose higher, darkness fell inside the room, and the messenger, shaking his head, vanished into the shadow of the *sishu* tree. That day I found out that you are a fairy from fairyland who have got yourself held captive by the weight of this world."

"But, Dada-Mashai," said Kusmi, "how did I come from fairy land?"

"One day, there in the *Parijat* forests, you were flying up and down on the back of a butterfly. Suddenly your eye fell on a



SANTHALS
Water-colour





SANTHAL MOTHER AND CHILD
Water-colour By Binodebihari Mukherjee

ferry-boat lying by the landing-steps of the horizon. It was made of white clouds, it was rocking in the wind. On the spur of the moment you got into that boat. Away it floated, and came to rest at the landing-steps of the earth, and your mother picked you up."

Kusmi was delighted, and clapped her hands. "Dada-Mashai," she said, "is it really true?"

"True?" I said. "Who says it's true? Do I care about what's true? It's Super-true."

Kusmi said, "Well then, shall I be able to go back to fairyland?"

"Perhaps you may," said I, "if the winds of fairyland fill the sails of your dreams."

"Then if they do, which way must I go? Which road? Is it a *very* long way?"

"It's very near," I said.

"How near?"

"As near as you are to me. You won't even have to leave that bed. Just see, the next time the moonlight comes into the room, you look outside, and you'll have no more doubt about it. You'll see that cloud ferry-boat coming down the river of the moonlight. But you've become an earth fairy now, so that boat won't do for you. Now you'll have to leave your body behind when you go wandering and have only your mind for your companion. Your "True" will stay behind here on earth, but your Super-true will be off and away, and none of us will be able to catch up with it."

Kusmi said, "All right then, when full moon night comes I'll be watching the sky. Will you take my hand and go with me, Dada-Mashai?"

"I can show you the way sitting here," I replied. "That's in my power, because I'm a dealer in the Super-true."

Super-True

"DADA-MASHAI, the other day you were talking about the Super-true. Is that to be seen only in fairyland?"

I said, "No, my dear, no. There's plenty in this world too. You've only to look for it. But then you have to have the eyes to see it."

"Can you see it then ?"

"I've got a kind of faculty for seeing, all of a sudden, what's invisible. When you sit learning your geography by heart, I remember how I used to learn geography. When I used to read about that Yang-tse-kiang of yours, a kind of geography would open out before my eyes that was of no use for passing examinations. Even today I can still see clearly the long lines of camels with their bales of silk. I got a place on the back of one camel."

"What a story, Dada-Mashai ! I know you never rode a camel."

"Now look here, young woman, you ask too many questions."

"All right, please go on. What next ? Where did you get a camel ?"

"What, questions again ? Camel or no camel, I go riding. Travel or no travel, nothing stops me wandering. That's my nature."

"What happened after that ?"

"After that I went to many many cities—Foochung, Hangchow, Chungking ; many many deserts I crossed by night, finding my way by the stars ; into the valleys of the 'Uskhus' mountains, through olive groves, and vineyards, and the shadow of pine trees. Once I fell into the hands of dacoits ; once I met a white bear in my path, its front paws raised."

"When did you get the time to travel about so much ?"

"When all the boys in the class were writing an examination in their exercise books."

"Then how did you pass the examination ?"

"It's easy to answer that—I didn't pass."

"All right—please go on."

"A few days before, I had been reading in the Arabian Nights about the Princess of China. Very beautiful she was ! And what do you think ?—I met that Princess. It was at Foochow at the steps by the river. The steps were of white marble ; over them was a sapphire canopy. Two *champa* trees grew one on each side, with two stone lions below them. From a golden bowl near by the smoke of incense rose curling into the air. One maid-servant was fanning the Princess, another waved a *chamor*, another was binding her hair. I somehow chanced upon them. The Princess was just feeding her milk-white peacock with pomegranate seeds ; she started

up crying 'Who are you?' At that very moment it flashed across my mind that I was the Prince of Bengal."

"What a tale! You're"

"Look here, questions again? I tell you, that day I was the Prince of Bengal, and that's how I escaped. If it hadn't been for that I should have been driven right away. As it was, she gave me tea in a golden cup. There was chrysanthemum mixed with the tea, the fragrance was simply intoxicating."

"And then she married you, didn't she?"

"See, that's a big secret. To this day no one knows."

Kusmi clapped her hands and declared, "Of course there was a wedding, a very grand wedding."

I saw that if there were no wedding she would be very disappointed. So in the end the wedding took place. I acquired half the kingdom of Hangchow and Srimati Angchani Devi into the bargain. And then

"And then what happened? I expect you got on the camel again."

"If I hadn't, how could I have come back here to be your Dada-Mashai?—but that camel goes nowhere. A *fusung* bird flew over my head singing."

"A *fusung* bird? Where does it live?"

"Nowhere—but its tail is blue, its wings yellow, and its neck brown. A whole flock of them flew by and sat on the *bachang* tree."

"I've never heard of the *bachang* tree."

"No more have I; it came into my mind just now as I was talking to you. That's a fault of mine, I never get things ready beforehand. As soon as they enter my head, out they come on the spot. Nowadays my *fusung* bird has flown off to the other side of the sea. I've heard nothing about it for a long time."

"But what happened about your wedding? What about the Princess?"

"Look here, not another word. I won't give you any answer. And besides, you weren't even born then, remember, so you've no need to be jealous."

REMINISCENCES OF AN ARTIST

OKAKURA

By ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

As far as I remember, Okakura,¹ during his first visit to India, stayed with cousin Suren.² I met him on a few occasions at the time though our acquaintance didn't have time to ripen. At Suren's, when I first saw him, he was sitting on a couch with a bronze cigarette box before him, shaped like a lotus, from which he would draw cigarettes and smoke them in an endless chain. He was a very heavy smoker and very sparing of words. Of short stature, handsome appearance, though with slanting eyes, he would sit in his couch, calm and serene like the very image of a superman wrapt in meditation. There was something majestic in his appearance. He had a great liking for Suren. "Suren was fit to be a king"—that's what he said about him.

It was after ten years of that that he paid his second visit to India. I had in the meantime blossomed into an artist ! He would often come to our Jorasanko studio and spend hours discussing Art and things cognate to it. He would explain the different values of Tradition, Observation and Originality in their relation to Art to Nandalal and my other pupils and illustrate his points with the help of three match-sticks.

The Japanese themselves had a great veneration for him. The ordinary Japanese looked upon him as a sort of semi-divine being. We had at that time a Japanese landscape gardener in our employ. When he learned one day that Okakura was in our house, he wished to offer his reverential respects to him. Okakura was then closeted with Nandalal inside the studio. The man came up to the door, hesitated, peeped in, but didn't venture to announce himself. He wouldn't come in even when I asked him to. He was standing near the door rubbing his hands in awkward silence when Okakura's

1. Kakuzo Okakura, the famous author of *The Ideals of the East*, *The Book of Tea*, etc., first came to India in 1901 (?). He renewed his visit ten years later. Of noble birth, he was the initiator and subsequently the director of Archaeological Researches in Japan. Well-known in Europe and America as a great art critic and connoisseur, he was also closely connected with various reform movements in Japan.

2. Surendranath Tagore, nephew of the Poet and translator of many of his works, was also at one time editor of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*. See his article on Kakuzo Okakura in Vol. II, Part 2 (Aug.-Oct. 1936) of this Journal.

glance fell on him and he raised his right forefinger as a sign of recognition of his presence and permission for him to enter. The man at once knelt down and entered his presence walking on his knees, his head moving up and down in unison with his movement. Okakura spoke a few words in his own language and the interview was at an end. The exit was in the same fashion as the entrance. During the whole time the man was in the room he was on his knees and he never stood up till he was quite out of sight. I asked him afterwards about the reason for this abject behaviour. "Oh, Sir, he is considered as a divine person in our country," the man replied; "it is not for one like me to come to his presence without being permitted and even then not without kneeling in reverence."

That second visit of his was a fruitful one. He had already been to a number of places of archæological and artistic interest. He had almost completed his itinerary. Only one or two sites were left to be visited. I suggested a visit to Konarak. "You will miss the genuine thing, the last remnant of it, if you miss seeing the temple-ruins of Konarak." He agreed to go and also expressed a desire to cover the Puri temple on his way if I could help him get the necessary permission. He was not in the best of health at the time. The illness which proved to be his last had already made its presence felt. But in spite of that he had come to India to have a first-hand knowledge of our past achievements in the realm of Art. He, an artist from a foreign land, had responded to the call of India and I, a fellow-artist in India, could not very well hesitate to offer all help. It was the least I could do for him. But though the call might come from the Lord, the keepers of Jagannath proved obdurate. They would not admit a foreigner. Even the Viceroy Curzon, the man who was accustomed to have his own way in everything, had to put up with their refusal with what good grace he could command. The thing was almost impossible We sat in secret conclave the Lion Gate was flung open the keepers stood at attention and my friend had a right royal reception inside the enclosure. In broad daylight he saw everything that was to be seen including a view of the images in the inner recesses of the temple. We had achieved the impossible !

From Puri Okakura proceeded to Konarak. He was in ecstasy over the ruins there. He declared afterwards that his visit to India would have been in vain if he had missed seeing Konarak. "It

was there that I felt the soul of Indian Art and read its message."

What he said when leaving our shores still rings in my ears : "I am blessed that I have seen what I have seen in India. I am prepared now for the last cross-over—now that I have tasted of Bliss !" He died after a short time of his return to Japan.

It was during this visit that he expressed his appreciation of the endeavour that was being made to revive an interest in Indian Art through the neo-Bengali school composed of Nandalal and others. Ten years before, during his first visit, he had seen nothing of the kind. "And if I come back after another ten years, I am sure I shall see some worth-while achievements."

But he never came back. As for me, I too am waiting to see something worth-while. Perhaps I will have to come back for that. Who knows ?

[Being an extract from *Jorasankor Dhāre*. Translated into English by Kanti Ghosh].



LITERATURE AND BABEL

By JOHN O. BURTT

THE CONFUSION of languages, according to the Hebrew story, was brought into the world by God to chasten man's presumptuousness, and in the field of practical affairs has proved a tedious obstacle to overcome. Those who, like the Arabs or the English, have made their own speech current over fresh parts of the world have offered some alleviation, but the diversity remains, a stumbling block to any rapid spread of knowledge or easy understanding between peoples. There is a difference too of status discernible among existing languages which constitutes a further aspect of the problem. Among the larger European nations the multiplicity of tongues does not give rise to any painful sense of limitation in the national life ; for it would not occur to, let us say, a cultured Frenchman that his field was seriously circumscribed because he knew no other language than his own. But elsewhere, as in India, the case is different : few educated Indians of today could rest content with Tamil or Hindi and even less perhaps with Oriya or Panjabi. When, as at present, the reading public is on the increase and a rising tide of education may fairly be expected to find expression in a larger output of distinguished writing, what is to be the attitude of men of letters, particularly in smaller countries, to this variety of language ? Should they in future try to break down national barriers in literature by using some more widely comprehended language than their own, thus tacitly accepting a lower status for their native speech, or should they, by adhering to their mother tongue, seek to improve its standing and so perpetuate the present multiplicity ? Before considering this question further let us view the problem briefly from a purely general standpoint.

That the world will one day be united by a common language is a hope for which there can be scanty grounds without a violent alteration in the course of history. Indeed the tendency is rather the reverse ; for nationalistic sentiment and the increasing need for educational measures have strengthened rather than undermined the existing multiplicity, and thus some languages which before seemed moribund or little more than peasant dialects now find their scope enlarging as politics and growing literacy elevate their status. The educated Russian of Napoleon's day, even if he spoke his native speech correctly, would look to French as the natural medium for

social intercourse, as a Bohemian would presumably have done to German, and only within fairly recent years has Russian literature flourished and Czech appeared again in government circles, or languages like Erse and Polish recaptured something of their former standing. Regrettable in some ways though this deliberate reinforcing of linguistic differences is, its reasonableness can hardly be disputed. The simple claims of human growth are in themselves enough to justify it, for the very spirit of a social group, and with it the dignity of the individuals who compose it, is intimately connected with the standing of its proper language. And when one is attempting, as many nations are, to foster in a people a livelier sense of citizenship and a realisation that administration, law and education are matters of importance to themselves, the least that one can do is to ensure that the language of the home and workshop reigns supreme, if in a modified form, in all the more exalted spheres of civic life. To seek to graft some second language on the body politic, to serve for government and education, because it represents a larger and more powerful culture, is simply to widen the gap, which at best can never quite be healed, between the governing and the governed, the learned and the simple. The triumph of a living dialect, whose status force of circumstance has raised, over some outworn mode of speech, cherished beyond its time in higher circles for cultural or sacred reasons, has been a common happening of history. Sanskrit gives ground before Bengali, Hindi and their compeers ; Latin capitulates to its successors ; literary to spoken Greek. What prospect has a wholly foreign speech without an overwhelming force of numbers in its favour ? Did Norman French, for instance, keep its hold on England ? Only where it has been accompanied by the utter abolition of the vernacular and with it all the life it represented does the bringing of an alien language to a country seem to have proved a real success. But in a world where rights of self-determination were respected it is unlikely that conditions could prevail whereby a language rooted in the soil could easily or quickly be supplanted by a greater rival ; and hence if we adopt a hopeful outlook towards the future we must expect to see an emphasising of linguistic differences.

The bearing of these points on India's progress needs no stressing. The sense of cultural unity among themselves and with the

western world which the necessity of learning English has brought the educated classes leads not a few to think that with the advent of some form of national rule a common language for the whole sub-continent will naturally be adopted. But, whether English, Hindustani, or some other speech is contemplated, it could not obviously take a leading place before the local vernaculars or hope to have a status equal to that now held by English. If nationalism bears proper fruit, the needs of simple literacy, of technical and scientific education, and various forms of civic training will be too great to brook the slowing presence of an unfamiliar speech among the everyday affairs of life. English, no longer rendered current by political necessity, will surely merit less attention than it has today, except from certain students and those with foreign contacts; nor could Hindustani, in places where it is not native, having as yet no marked pre-eminence among its fellows, expect to claim a more than superficial study in a country which should have little time for unessentials. It looks in fact as though the reign of babel will continue for many years to come, in those parts of the world where it is now established; and on the future India, it seems, its hold will tend to strengthen, entailing, it should be remembered by those to whom this seems a set-back, a gradual rise in status of all her major vernaculars and with it the reduction of many evils now prevailing which necessarily attend the dominance of one speech over others.

Returning to the field of literature we have, it seems, already found the answer to our question. Indeed, on other grounds, it could have hardly been in doubt; for literature, as we shall later show, is such that few, if any, could produce a writing worthy of the name in any language but their own. But, granted that we have gauged the trend correctly, what are we to say of the prospect? Whereas in Roman times two cognate languages would give the key to all the writings thought to matter, today the reader who aspires to sample freely from the feast of literature is daunted by a vast array, and seemingly the future is to be no better. Moreover, is an author, especially one coming from a small community, to have no means of writing for a wider public than his own vernacular gives him?

To take these questions in their order. Perhaps the reader need not after all despair. He must in any case accept the limitations which the mighty bulk of literature imposes on him and may indeed

find ample satisfaction within the confines of his native language. Moreover, though in commerce, politics and science some uniformity of speech would be a benefit, the case is not so clear with literature to which the very diversity has given a charm, hardly perhaps to be appreciated except by those who know that languages, like individuals, have their special traits of character. Many of them, no doubt, at present can boast of few attractions, but there remains the noble group which has made its mark upon the world, and among its members those of us who have the time and inclination are free to make our choice, enlarging our acquaintance. The difficulty of mastering one's native speech would seem to argue the futility of trying to probe the mysteries of a foreign literature, and no doubt a touch of unreality will always go with reading of this kind. Words which are common-place will sometimes be invested with an ill-deserved romance ; others will fail to win the recognition due to them ; the finer shades of meaning may at times be missed. And yet in view of these and even greater drawbacks it is remarkable how soon the graces of a foreign literature begin to make themselves apparent to one who has a fair appreciation of his own. Even the advantages of travel and a good colloquial knowledge are not entirely indispensable, greatly though these will enhance his interest ; and those accustomed to the world of books need none to point out to them the differences of temper which separate, for instance, French and German or even Spanish and Italian. With each a world in some sense separate is revealed : there are the things which it alone is capable of saying, the words which cannot be translated, the associations, historical and cultural, which grow on one with each book read. Given an hour or two of leisure and books enough to meet his need, the reader picks the world which he will enter according to mood and repertoire. In this perhaps he feels at home, and half a dozen pages will suffice to carry him effortlessly into its recesses ; in that one he is still a stranger, forcing a slow, laborious entry. Above all it is the difference, the individuality of mould which each can impart to some common theme of human inspiration, which gives him his supreme reward for the initial struggle with the grammar and the long hours lavished upon dictionaries. And yet he finds resemblances as well, often where there may seem to be no conscious literary affinity, between some Russian poet, for example, and the Greeks ;

and not the smallest compensation for his efforts is to see how spark has kindled spark in different places and from age to age. Without the burden of a commentary he can, if he is so inclined, trace out some portion of the strands which tie a man of genius to those whom he has followed, Milton perhaps to Vergil or Ariosto, Racine to Euripides. Regardless of time and distance he may find his mind led back from a winter evening in modern England, with its electric lamps and ordered fireside, to a humbler scene in sixteenth century France where a bent old woman sits beside a candle dreaming of the past ; and whether he has the lines of Williams or of Ronsard before him, in either case the scene becomes more vivid by contrast or comparison with the other.

But, curtained from the bleak December nights,
 You sit beside the else-deserted fire
 And 'neath the glow of double-polèd lights,
 Till your alert eyes and quick judgement tire,
 Turn some new poet's page,

Again : he may feel the peace of nightfall over the northern hills merging into the warmer darkness of the Aegean, the lines of Goethe into those of Alcman. Here is no slavish imitation or vain display of literary allusion but rather the rebirth in another guise of something which is always fresh, and the knowledge how it has taken shape elsewhere will heighten his enjoyment. The vigorous lines of Gray, against their quiet country setting, ring all the finer for their echoes of a bygone world and the majestic presence, in the background, of Lucretius :

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

But let us turn now to our second question. Although a reader may perhaps accept without misgiving the prospect we envisage, a writer has a harder role to fill. In a country which has yet to make its way in letters he may be tempted to enlarge his public by writing in an alien language, and yet there is no doubt that literature, as the word is commonly understood, is something going too deep to be attempted in anything other than a life-time language, the speech of work and leisure, attuned beyond all question to the world which

it addresses. He should then, in so far as he attempts creative work, be loyal to the language of his people, for there his prospects of achievement lie. The days have surely passed when peoples could, in relative seclusion, produce a national literature in seeming independence of external models ; and so, in building up a new tradition, he will perhaps resort at times to other literatures for inspiration. That the fruits of such a quest can be turned to good account we have implied already, and yet he should remember, despite what we have said, that the contact of one language on another does not invariably make for good in writing. Here too the fact of difference of status has shown its influence in the past. The impact of a literature already far developed upon a people culturally more backward has sometimes warped the growth of native modes in writing, as was in some respects the case with Latin, and literature affords enough examples of lifeless imitation to warn the author to be wary. But dangerous or not, the literary influence of one country on another may be expected in the long run to increase, and a greater internationalism in letters is likely to be aimed at, a fact which brings us to the final point in our discussion. For, since few only can be linguists, it follows that much will devolve upon translations, and, since the India of tomorrow will need their services as much as any, we shall devote the last part of this essay to a brief consideration of their place in literature.

The value of translations cannot be denied ; it has been proved by centuries of use. Especially within the field of prose there have been many marked successes, but even here the incompatibility of languages obtrudes itself, as may be shown by two specific illustrations. Take first some individual meanings. Any translation into English of a Bengali story dealing with common life would likely enough contain such words as 'bath', 'meal', or 'tank'. But whereas the Bengali equivalents of these have a highly definite meaning, their very sound calling up an appropriate background of detail and association, the same cannot be said of the English words, which in the translation are having their meanings strained and even distorted. To one who has not been in India 'bath' has not the least connection with a tube-well or a ghat and 'tank' gives no suggestion of a spacious, semi-natural pool. The sentences in which these words occur thus lose their local colour and must rely on footnotes or the like in order to become intelligible. Consider secondly this passage :

"I went down yesterday to the Peiraeus with Glaukon, the son of Ariston, to pay my devotions to the Goddess and also because I wished to see how they would conduct the festival, since his was its inauguration. I thought the procession of the citizens very fine, but it was no better than the show made by the marching of the Thracian contingent."

These are the opening words of Plato's Republic, in which the writer sets out to introduce, in as unassuming and natural a way as possible, a profound philosophical discussion by describing a simple incident of everyday life. Now, although he has had no experience whatever of life in Ancient Greece, it is a fact that any student of the language who reads these lines in the original will grant at once that Plato has succeeded: no opening sentences could be less jarring, more ingratiating. And yet the English version, which, so far as one can see, could hardly be improved upon, does not produce the same effect. Why? Because the language is being employed to describe a scene with which it is unfamiliar. It is not used to names like 'Glaukon, the son of Ariston', nor are those whose thoughts it naturally expresses accustomed to the inauguration of festivals or even to speaking of the 'citizens' or 'Thracians'. And so discordant notes are introduced and Plato's aim is thwarted.

With poetry naturally the case is worse, as any lover of Tagore will realise. Take this example from Gitanjali:

"In the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers. Today the morning has closed its eyes, heedless of the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and a thick veil has been drawn over the ever-wakeful blue sky."

Shravana is a month in the rains, comparatively cool and cloudly, which surely has its own associations for Bengalis, whereas the word 'July', through being bandied round the world, can hardly claim the same integrity of meaning; yet if it is allowed a character at all it must suggest a month of dryness, heat and light. Moreover, can these sentences, indistinguishable from prose, which, though well-worded, do not seem to stand comparison with the poetry known to readers of English, give any reasonable understanding of the original, enhanced by rhyme and metre and an intonation all its own? But then perhaps the version could be bettered? It might, of course, be done in verse, but if it were, the resulting lines would have to resemble a typical English poem sufficiently to win acceptance, and

not a little of the originality would vanish. Success in translating poetry, such as is claimed for the German rendering of Shakespeare, is something rare indeed and must in any case involve a transformation in which the gifts of the translator play their own creative part.

Thus, while in prose the chances of success are less remote, so far as poets are concerned translation can hardly be accepted as a means of gaining a wide appreciation for their talent in the full sense of the word ; at most it has publicity and information value, calling attention to the existence of a man and to special pieces of his work, for which a gifted rendering will serve as an advertisement. Since, then, its function is to commend some part of foreign literature to the people of a country, it should wherever possible be done by one of them, not only because the version is more likely to be natural and tempered to the reader's viewpoint but because there is the underlying thought that one who is his fellow-countryman and shares his outlook has read this work in the original and thinks it worth commending to him. Translation therefore as a task is something to be treated with the greatest deference by all who acknowledge in literature the indivisibility of form and content. Though in the final count impossible, it is, as we have seen, the best means we possess of fostering a general international sense in letters and is on that account well worth the trying. But let us not forget, where haste and confidence go with it, how seriously misleading it may prove.

In conclusion then the upshot of our argument is this : that, though for simple international dealings and works of exposition some international language, even imperfectly handled, may suffice, in common life and in the realm of literature the reign of babel must continue, and those whose interests lie in that direction should turn it to advantage if they can, by sampling something in a language other than their own. It follows that the author too must acquiesce and not imagine, because the present age is cosmopolitan, that by adopting a speech more widely known than his own or pressing for translations of his works he can secure the lasting name he covets. Aeschylus, after all, was satisfied to write his trilogies for a handful of his fellow citizens and Shakespeare's plays appeared before an insignificant public. Let him too dwell upon the world he knows, enriching his immediate circle, and, as with them, it may be left to men of other lands and other ages to make his reputation world-wide.

MARX AND MARXISM

By K. N. BHATTACHARYA

It is well-known that speaking of himself Karl Marx once said : "All that I know is that I am not a Marxist." What Marx meant by this rather paradoxical statement was that he was not a Marxist in the sense in which Marxism was being popularly interpreted. It was a plain hint to his followers and admirers not to attribute to Marxism any meaning which its own author did not intend to give.

If this was the state of Marxism during the period of Marx's own life-time, then it is hardly surprising that half a century later Marxism has tended to be nothing more or better than a maze of doctrinal confusion. The confusion is heightened by the fact that everyone talks of Marxism, adds his own version, and draws his own inference. Popular enthusiasm has produced such a vast literature on Marxism that from its perusal no one can truly comprehend "what Marxism is, and what it is not." As a recent author has well put it : "Marx has been called many things, and many things have been called Marxism", but for an average reader Marx has never been properly evaluated, and proper evaluation of Marxism is getting increasingly difficult.

There is another reason which stands in the way of a dispassionate approach to the study of Marxism. To millions of persons all over the world Karl Marx is a prophet. And prophets belong to a class of men whose evaluation does not depend on the ordinary processes of human reasoning. Prophets inspire, and their followers live, or at least, try to live up to the inspiration which has been aroused in them. Faith, and not reason, determines the esteem which they pay as a tribute to their Masters.

To others who are not moved by a similar faith, the position of Karl Marx is, and must be, different. The validity of his greatness is to be tested by the ordinary process of logic and reason. Unlike many prophets, Karl Marx was a learned man. His genius explored practically all the important branches of human learning—philosophy, sociology, and economics. But a dispassionate study of his academic achievement shows that as a philosopher he had visioned only the half-truth, as a sociologist he had given only an imperfect account of human values, as an economist his doctrines were incomplete. In the world of letters and learning his position is by no means very

pre-eminent. His philosophy, made in Germany, is only an inverted child of Hegel, and his economics, made in England, is only a twisted application of Ricardo's labour theory of value. Nowhere Karl Marx is purely original. His scientific socialism is indeed a "long chain of wishful thinking, by no means free from internal contradictions, and far more utopian than scientific." But yet in one respect, Karl Marx is original. No man in history has combined in him to such a degree the dual role of a learned man and a prophet. That makes him enigmatic. As a learned man, he baffles us by his hypnotic appeal to the conscience of mankind. As a prophet, he overwhelms us by the sheer weight of his knowledge and scholarship. Moreover, he preached a religion whose appeal was direct. It was a material religion, (though a contradiction in terms), whereof "the proletariat is its god, capitalism its devil,—and classless society the final millennium or heaven on earth." Karl Marx attempted to bring that millennium on earth, and by his revolutionary fervour he was almost on the borderland of success. He not only preached a gospel, but also pleaded action. Karl Marx is great—and singularly great.

The academic aspect of Marxism is inter-linked with the three intricate structures of Dialectics, Interpretation of History, and Surplus Value. In between the second and third is sometimes inter-spaced the theory of class struggle. Many dispassionate critics have honestly inquired, whether the three (or four) Marxist tenets are really inter-linked, or mere piece-meal ends which are at best very loosely joined. Even if they are inter-linked, the question arises how far these tenets are indispensable for understanding communism or the future classless society.

So far as the use of Dialectics is concerned, Karl Marx, as is well known, was indebted to Hegel. Earlier in history, the two chief features of dialectics, that is to say, the ideas of eternal conflict and continual change are to be found in Heraclitus, "the laughing philosopher" and Democritus of Abdera, "the weeping philosopher". Later on, Plato and Aristotle used the method as a way of discovering truth by discussion or debate. Still later dialectics was highly regarded by the schoolmen of the Middle Ages also, "as contributing to right thinking and sound argument and had an honourable place among the seven liberal arts."

Karl Marx can claim no originality in the use of dialectics.

Nobody also quarrels with him for his having made use of it. But where Marx erred was on the emphasis that he had put on the value and usefulness of dialectics as a method of discovering truth. Marx held dialectics as the only method of understanding "the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought." In this, as in subsequent arguments, Marx tried to gain his point by over-emphasis. Dialectic method, however important as a tool for knowing truth, is at best an imperfect tool. Great discoveries of science have not been made through dialectics. Intuition which has widened the boundaries of human knowledge and flowered man's experience into rich art and poetry is independent of dialectics. Of the three methods of knowing truth, dialectic, scientific inquiry and intuition, Marx unconditionally rejected the last two, and accepted only the first. Marx was plainly dogmatic and had a limited vision. His mind was not open to the whole truth. He gave to his followers only glimpses of partial knowledge.

Marx applied the dialectical method in the interpretation of history, and the result was rather disastrous. The interpretation of history is, and must necessarily be, economic, for otherwise his pre-conceived and self-chosen goal, viz. the dictatorship of the proletariat could not be logically reached. To Marx, it was not the inquiry of truth that determined the destined goal of mankind, but it was the pre-destined goal that determined the nature and the form of inquiry. The reason given by Marx that the interpretation of history must necessarily be economic is most unconvincing, and to-day the thinking world refuses to take him seriously on this point. The basis of the economic or material interpretation of history, to quote Karl Marx himself, is this: "The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness." As if this was not clear enough, Marx further added, "The ultimate cause of all social changes . . . is to be sought . . . in the economics of the age."

Here too, as in the use of dialectics, Marx tried to gain his point by over-emphasis. It is true that existence determines consciousness—but Marx is singularly silent over this root problem of philosophy, viz., what determines the existence itself? Whether

from the fruit comes the tree, or from the tree comes the fruit, is an eternally vexed question which cannot be solved by sheer emphasis on one aspect of the issue.

Besides, the conflict of matter and spirit is an age-old problem, and if an over-all spiritual philosophy of life is not acceptable to the majority of mankind, a pure material philosophy of life is also to be rejected as being equally untenable. The economics of the age may be one of the causes of social change, it may even be a very important cause, but is by no means the ultimate cause. It is quite unrealistic to suggest that men and women are responsible to nothing but considerations of immediate self-interest. "Man does not live by bread alone" is an old Biblical saying, and to twist it to mean that since life cannot exist without bread, therefore life is bread is to undermine the glory of existence. If Marx could have opened himself to truth, it would not have been difficult for him to realise that a theory of history is also a theory of human life, and must necessarily cover the "gamut of human passions". "The infinite variety of human life cannot be constrained within the strait jacket of one set of ends, however important." Marx should have known it better that "every philosophy grasps a part of the truth, none grasps it all." The great mistake of Marx was that he believed that his was the last word of wisdom.

The historical materialism of Marx led him to the enunciation of the theory of class-struggle which in turn was linked with his famous theory of surplus-value. "All past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class-struggles" (Engels), because, to quote Karl Marx himself : "At a certain stage of their development the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production. Then comes the period of social revolution." In the past such conflict had existed between free man and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journey-man. In the capitalist society the struggle exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Proletariat struggle is the anti-thesis of the capitalist-thesis, and dialectic materialism shows that "each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes." Proletariat-revolution is therefore a scientific inevitability, and the new synthesis which will emerge out of the revolution is what is known as communism or classless society.

The danger to the theory of class-struggle is its beautiful simplicity. Struggle is a question of human relationship. It is not quite intelligible from the Marxist literature why classes first came into existence, and it is equally unintelligible why all human struggles should end in a classless society. The end of class-struggle in a way contradicts Marxism. It annihilates the whole process of dialectic growth—thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Time ceases and dialectic materialism comes to a dead stop. If social changes and progress have taken place through class-struggle and revolution, then the end of class-struggle through a classless society must prove to the future mankind a burden whose dead-weight and monotony would be simply suffocating.

To make the theory of class-struggle more ready in its appeal and scientific in its appearance, Marx linked it with the theory of surplus value. The contradiction in the capitalist society, according to Marx, is not the class-struggle (because the class-struggle is only a result) but the emergence of surplus value which makes the class struggle inevitable. Value is a result of labour (as in Ricardo's labour theory of value), and all values should therefore accrue to labour. But owing to the mode of our social organisation labour gets only a part of what it produces, the surplus value which remains is appropriated by the bourgeoisie. The proletariat are not long likely to tolerate this mis-appropriation (or exploitation) of what belongs to them. Proletariat uprising is inevitable, and a new society will be established, in which means of production will be held jointly and all values shared equally.

Whatever may be the other omissions of Marx in the statement of the theory of surplus value, one confusion seems to be glaring. Marx did not make it clear whether his objection was to the actual emergence of surplus value, or to its possession and appropriation by the privileged class. The two problems are distinct and separate. The sum-total of economic values created in a society is a result of technology in production, whereas its distribution is a question of ownership and sociology. The contention of Karl Marx is obviously not that the surplus value is wrong, but that its appropriation by one class of persons is unjust. In the new mode of production in a communist system it is not that there would be no surplus value ; in fact in a communist system the mode of production is hardly

new—and the surplus value will continue to emerge through the joint co-operation of labour and capital—only its appropriation would be different. All values which include the surplus value would accrue to the community itself.

The problem of surplus value is therefore not how and why it arises, but who appropriates it. It is not an economic, and far less a philosophical and dialectical problem, it is essentially a social problem. To be more precise, it is a problem concerning the human nature ; whether individual acquisitiveness is more natural than and preferable to collective ownership. "Let no one call anything his own" is an old Biblical doctrine. Like all good things in our scriptures mankind chose to give a go-by to this salient teaching. Perhaps Marx wanted to re-inforce it, but the essence of his teaching was lost in the maze of his philosophy and economics.

Marxism *vis-a-vis* socialism is thus to be separated from its dialectic materialism and its economics. Marxians are apt to regard them as the main pillars of the structure of scientific socialism. But in reality, they are redundant to a clear understanding of socialism. Marxian philosophy and economics are half-truths and half-utopias. Socialism in its essence is only an appeal for the transformation of our instinct of acquisitiveness for making the world a better place to live in. It is a problem concerning the human nature ; in a wider sense it is an ethical concept ; but by no means a pure economic issue. But Marx confused between ethics and economics, and made socialism a more complicated and less acceptable proposition.

If Marx is compared with Mahatma Gandhi, the difference becomes manifest. Both have their teachings which are widely accepted by a large number of followers. But Gandhi made his teaching simple and direct. His non-violence is a straight appeal to the human heart. He did not put it under the garb of philosophy and economics and try to make it scientific. As for Marx, who would not concede to him that the majority of mankind are down-trodden and oppressed ? Nobody can deny that on the whole the present world is a rotten one and requires a radical transformation. The appeal of Marxism "as a gospel of the poor and the religion of the underdog" is immense and almost irresistible. That explains the popularity of Marxism and its increasingly wider acceptability. But the way in which Marxism is presented is open to criticism. It does not reflect the whole truth. It is a curious blend of science, utopia and idealism. That explains its failure and frustration.



Romain Rolland

Rabindranath Tagore



Romain Rolland with his father and sister at Villeneuve

REVIEWS

ROLLAND AND TAGORE: Letters and Conversations. Published by
Visva-Bharati, 6/3, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Calcutta. Rs. 3/8/-

THIS is a small book, but an important and a delightful one. Delightful because one can return to it again and again and find that it does not lose its freshness, important because it is a challenge to this "second post-war age" from two of the most sensitive and completely human spirits of our time.

The main body of the book presents in translation the extant letters addressed by Rolland to Tagore between 1919 and 1940. These are prefaced by reprints of each writer's tribute to the genius of the other, and by C. F. Andrews' account of the origin of their friendship. At the end of the book are summaries of some of the conversations they held when at rare intervals they met, and some short but very useful notes on persons, books and places mentioned in the text.

The friendship between Rolland and Tagore was born, among the passions of the first world war, of the affinity of two spirits each of whom stood nobly "above the battle"; it ripened during the restless interlude of harassed "peace", and ended (at least in its mortal aspect) in the darkness of the second Armageddon. In 1919, in that first post-war period, Rolland writes to request Tagore's signature to a "Declaration of Independence of the Spirit", which opens:

"Toilers of the spirit, companions, scattered all over the world, separated from one another for five years by armies, by censorship, by hate of nations at war, we take this opportunity, when barriers are falling and frontiers are reopening, of making an appeal to you to reform your fraternal union—but let it be a fresh union, firmer and stronger than the one which existed before We serve Truth alone which is free, with no frontiers, with no limits, with no prejudices of race or caste We recognise the People,—one and universal—the People comprising all men, all equally our brothers."

There is the challenge to the intelligentsia of this second post-war age, repeated again and again through the book. A part of this challenge is the shared conviction that, in Rolland's words, "the union of Europe and Asia must be in the centuries to come the most solemn task of mankind", that they form "the two hemispheres of the human mind" whose mutual co-operation is essential to its welfare. While our gloomy prophets speculate on the insane disaster of a third world war of "colour", such seemingly quixotic sanity, as the editors' introduction well names it, deserves a hearing.

Not that either writer is under any illusions. There is pathos as well as comfort in the way they share their experience of loneliness and recognise its inevitability. "Our home is in the future," writes Rolland, and then adds, perhaps only in eternity. He who saw Europe's doom as "the envelope of fire enwrapping eternal peace" is in more than intellectual accord with the poet-prophet who saw beyond the "Crisis in Civilisation" the essential human spirit finally triumphant.

The personality of Rolland dominates the book, and we welcome the domination. But we share the editors' hope that it may soon be possible to include in a second edition the letters from Tagore to Rolland, for which the specimens in the

"methodology", "terms of service," etc, tends to obscure what is even more central to the understanding of his achievement—his spontaneous *delight* in the Father and His world, that deep *joy* of his in which he endured the cross. Dr. Kumarappa is also unsatisfying in his treatment of Jesus' attitude to sex and marriage. But such criticism is after all a measure of one's gratitude for the note that Dr. Kumarappa has sounded, and one's hope that it may be sounded still more deeply and continuously.

M. S.

GANDHIJI : Edited by D. G. Tendulkar, M. Chalapathi Rau, Mridula Sarabhai, Vithalbhai Jhaveri. Published by Keshav Bhikaji Dhawale, Bombay. Price, Rs. 12/8/-

GANDHIJI's seventy-fifth birthday volume has gained wide popularity in spite of its naturally high price. It is good that the publishers have issued this cheaper reprint in order to meet the popular demand. All the articles and pictures contained in the original have been reproduced without change, and the printing has also been of the same high quality.

The present book on Gandhiji contains certain features which will give it a permanent interest to readers. Apart from the fact that there are numerous photographs in it of great merit or interest, the Editors have gathered together within this volume a chronology of the chief events of Gandhiji's life, a list of his satyagraha campaigns, tours, incarcerations, fasts, and also a fairly good index of books written by and upon Gandhiji by various writers.

Authoritative statements on different aspects of Gandhiji's life and activities are also there ; and these were entrusted to competent writers. We should particularly recommend to the reader the articles by Mahadev Desai, Maurice Frydman, Saiyidain, Humayun Kabir, and Nandalal Bose. Tolstoy's letter to Gandhiji in South Africa has been reproduced in this volume ; only one wishes that Gandhiji's letter to Tolstoy had also been there, at the same time. Interested readers will have to turn to The World's Classics edition of Tolstoy's works in order to get at that letter.

N. K. B.

FROM YERAVDA MANDIR : by M. K. Gandhi. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Third Edition, 1945. Price Annas Eight. Pp. iv + 68.

THIS book forms one of the basic writings of Gandhiji just like his *Hind-Swaraj* or *Ethical Religion*. It contains his root-ideas on Truth, Non-violence, etc. and the deductions which he draws from them like Non-possession, Bread Labour, Swadeshi and the like. The present issue is a reprint of the third revised edition.

N. K. B.

GANDHIJI'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT :

1942-44 : Second Edition, September, 1945. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Price Rs. 2/8/- Pp. xxxii + 360.

THE present edition of the *Correspondence* contains some new material in the shape of Gandhiji's confidential circular to the members of the Working Committee regarding the contemplated course of the August Movement, two new letters from Lord Samuel, and so forth. For the rest, it contains all the correspondence carried on with the Provincial and the Central Governments between August 1942 and 1944. It is a most important book of reference.

In spite of the present prohibitive cost of production, we are glad that the price has been kept unusually low.

N. K. B.

PUBLIC FINANCE AND OUR POVERTY : by J. C. Kumarappa.

Third Edition, September, 1945. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Price Rs. 1/8/- Pp. xii + 110.

SHRI KUMARAPPA'S brochure is a notable book ; for it gives within a very short compass just what national-minded Indians feel about the Finance Policy pursued by the British Government in India. The present edition contains a new chapter on Sterling Credits.

We hope that the book will be widely appreciated by the reading public.

N. K. B.

ETHICS OF FASTING : by M. K. Gandhi. Edited by Jag Parvesh Chander. Indian Printing Works, Kacheri Road, Lahore. Pp. v + 123.

SHRI JAG PARVESH has recently been responsible for a number of small collections of Gandhiji's writings. The present booklet deals with the subject of fasting. All through his political career, Gandhiji has looked upon fasts as an integral part of the armoury of a Satyagrahi ; and the compiler deserves congratulations for having brought together, within the compass of a small volume, relevant extracts from his writings up to date.

N. K. B.

GANDHIJI : AS WE KNOW HIM : by Seventeen Contributors. Edited

by Chandrashanker Shukla, with a foreword by Sarojini Naidu.

Vora & Co. Publishers Ltd. 3, Round Building, Bombay 2.

Price Rs. 3/4/- Pp. viii + 145.

A DELIGHTFUL book which contains the impression left on various minds by the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. Some of the sketches are by names to conjure with, such as Tagore or Gokhale. They give us a picture of Gandhiji's many-sided personality. Thus some of the contributors have been impressed by

his sincerity, courage and strength, some by his spirit of surrender to God, while others again have been deeply moved by his utter humility and abundant humaneness.

We should particularly ask the reader to go through the accounts of Rev. Doke and Gokhale, of Mrs. Polak and Rev. Holmes.

The book deserves to be in the hands of every lover of Gandhiji.

N. K. B.

CAPTIVE SOIL : Mrinalini Sarabhai. International Book House, Ltd. Price, Rs. 2/8/-

A PLAY in two acts on the ancient theme, "Right for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne," clearly inspired by the particular variations on that theme supplied by twentieth century India. The first act sketches character and motive in the human instruments of the government, the second those of the rebels and victims. The method is impressionist rather than realist; true dramatic action is nil and speeches are self-revelatory monologues. The purpose is to re-create a spiritual atmosphere, not to tell a story. Whether the dramatic medium is the right one may be doubted: in any case the work is to be judged by lyrical rather than dramatic standards, by its success in evoking in the reader the emotion the artist has experienced. One's general impression is that the vision is authentic, the executive skill not yet equal to its task. The best passages are those which employ a very simple and beautiful prose, and a few individual lines of verse; but the effect is not sustained, and when rhyme is attempted, mingled in uncertain fashion with lines of unrhymed verse, the result is sometimes disastrous. One would like to see more of this author's prose, for it is capable of greater things.

M. S.

LONGMAN'S MISCELLANY NUMBER III : Longmans Green & Co. Ltd. , Calcutta. Price, Rs. 5/-.

To say that Miscellany Number III maintains the high level reached by its predecessors is an indication of its worth. The contents are varied and include poems, short stories, travel diaries and descriptions, literary criticism, and two "sample chapters" from longer works, which like the "trailers" at the cinema, whet the reader's appetite. It so happens that these two, "Goa Today" and "Grand-parents" are among the most interesting contributions to a volume in which there is something for every serious literary taste. The opportunity offered to new writers is of real value, and it is encouraging to see that this publication is finding a market in England also.

M. S.

MODERN TENDENCIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE :

by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty. The Book Exchange,
Calcutta. Price, Rs. 2/-.

THIS small volume is a collection of essays on various personalities and aspects of modern English poetry. The author defends his exclusive concentration on poetry, in a book whose title might lead one to anticipate a wider range, by the contention that all significant thought trends show themselves first in the creative poetry of an epoch. His main contention is that while "the decadent nineties were bewailing...that poetry had gone from life, the moderns have walked into the market place and found it there." Some of the essays, while rich in suggestive comment, seem to lack unity and strength of conception ; among the most enjoyable are the short study of Stephen Spender's feeling for time, and the concluding paper on "Rhythmic Variations in Modern Verse."

M. S.

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI : Selected Writings : Edited and arranged with
an Introduction by Prof. N. Gangulee. Lindsay Drummond Ltd. ,
London. Price, 10s. 6d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SUN YAT-SEN : Selections from his writings :
Compiled and introduced with a biographical sketch by Prof. N.
Gangulee. The Sylvan Press, London. Price, 10s. 6d.

PROFESSOR GANGULEE has put us all greatly in his debt for these two excellent volumes. It is rarely that a reviewer has the pleasure of being able to recommend books so unreservedly to the general reader. Two men are chosen, each of great significance to the modern world, and each is made to speak to us in his own person by means of a judicious selection from his writings, with just sufficient introduction to refresh our memories with regard to the history of his country to enable us to follow him intelligently.

Prof. Gangulee writes for youth ; the volume on Sun Yat-Sen is "dedicated to the Youth of the United Nations," that on Mazzini to "Giovane Italia and Young India." It is a timely appeal. Everything that will enable the young to understand the basic forces of modern China is of importance, especially to India, and Sun Yat-Sen is a basic force. Even more valuable is it that Young India should be directed, in this fascinating volume, to the ideals and aspirations of the great Italian who so inspired our fathers and grandfathers. His writings are alive and challenging today, thrillingly relevant to our own situation.

It is a stimulating exercise to read these two volumes side by side, and to study the reactions of their two heroes to the revolutionary situation in their countries. In each there is tragic grandeur of heroic renunciation—Sun Yat-Sen relinquishing the Presidency of the infant republic to Yuan Shih-Kai in the hope

of saving China from civil war—Mazzini refusing to recognise Italian unity if won at the price of the democratic liberties he held so dear. Then there are the differences between them—differences of temperament and outlook which it is probably not imaginary to attribute in part to the difference of race. One of the most interesting phases of this divergence is in their different reactions to the problem of “government during the period of insurrection”—i. e. the first stage of revolutionary government, when decisions of military rapidity must be made. Mazzini here greatly exceeds Sun Yat-Sen in the passion of his plea that *at all costs* individual dictatorship, even as a temporary expedient, must be avoided. His exalted idealism reminds us again and again of Mahatma Gandhi.

To the youth of India we say : “Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest”—you will nourish in yourselves political wisdom and maturity.

M. S.

INDIAN CULTURE : By M. Mujeeb, M. A. Published by the Quaker Centre, 772 East Park Road, Delhi. Price,-/12/- annas.

PROFESSOR MUJEEB of the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, has succeeded in packing into 32 pages of terse, witty and forceful prose an amazing amount of balanced vision and challenging judgment. His analysis of the objective and subjective aspects of “Culture-civilisation”, and the essential role of the personality in their harmony and health, provides a more useful starting point than many wordy battles about the proper spheres of these two words. His masterly sketch of the successive modifications of this culture, from the Indus Valley peoples through the Vedic, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim eras down to the British period, should be appreciated by those beginners who in many books “cannot see the wood for the trees”, and is for all its brevity far too suggestive ever to be dull. The greatest interest of all however attaches to the last section in which the modern “two-nation” theory is faced, and with it that of the effect of British policy on Indian culture, which is worth quoting as one out of many thought-provoking passages.

“We have been reduced to a market, and a market has no religion, no moral law, no self and no expression... We have religions, but the religious spirit withers and dies unless it finds expression. And how is it to find that without society and without citizenship, without the power to govern or the right to serve? As citizens of India responsible for all injustice and all wrongs, all failures and all achievements, we would have sought and found inspiration in our religions. As buyers and sellers in a market, all that we can do, and have been doing, is to prove that the commodity we call our religion is as good as any other.”

The whole pamphlet deserves a wide publicity.

M. S.

A SHEAF OF GANDHI ANECDOTES : by G Ramachandran.

Hind Kitabs, 267, Hornby Road, Bombay. Re. 1/4/-

ANECDOTES are abridged, authentic autobiographies. They illumine the path to a person's soul, for in them there is a disarming, discerning directness. And this holds with greater truth in respect of life-changing, luminous personalities like Gandhiji. The volume, under review, is an assortment of fifteen anecdotes which reveal Gandhiji's multiple personality, as integrated in the unity of his passion for, and pursuit of, truth.

A public worker is neglectful in keeping an accurate account of the funds entrusted to his care and he comes to Gandhiji with a request that he may be exonerated from the results of his remissness. He is treated with a sternness reminiscent of the righteous indignation of the Jewish Prophets of old and compelled to repent "by full self-correction". A blind woman insists on being allowed to stay in the Satyagraha Ashram. Gandhiji first demands that she should earn her right to food and shelter by learning to spin, to which she does not agree, and so she is sent to the Home for the Blind, he himself leading her to the door. A peasant and his wife desire to wash Gandhiji's feet with water and then carry the dirty water home to be administered as a medicine to their ailing son in the superstitious belief that he would be cured thereby. Gandhiji disabuses them of their dark superstition by advising them "to trust in God and fetch a doctor". An educated youngman tells a lie, in fun, to a child and he is admonished that "it is better to tell no lie to a child and to accustom children to speak the truth in everything". A South Indian lad when convalescing after an attack of dysentery, is given coffee, prepared with his own hands, by Gandhiji, despite Gandhiji's dislike of that drink. Kasturba once protests against being spared the strain of entertaining some guests who have arrived without previous notice and after the kitchen had been closed for the noon, and Gandhiji replies with a twinkle in his eyes, "Do not you know, Ba, I am afraid of you on such occasions?" To keep an appointment Gandhiji slips out of a crowd, that insists on his alighting from the car *enroute*, and getting into another car looks back and waves his hands "like a merry schoolboy who had escaped from some tight corner !" A heavy and stolid Zamindar, accustomed to having everything done for him by his servants, learns the lesson of self-effort from a small act of Gandhiji. Entering the decorated room, reserved for him during his visit to Santiniketan, years ago, Gandhiji says to Gurudeva, "Why bring me to this bridal chamber ? Where is the bride ?" and Gurudeva answers back promptly, "Santiniketan, the ever young queen of our hearts, welcomes you."

"But surely, she would hardly care," rejoins Gandhiji, "to look twice at the old toothless pauper that I am ?"

"No," remarks Gurudeva, "our Queen has loved Truth and worshipped it unreservedly all these long years."

And several more such anecdotes are recounted delightfully and dramatically

by the author. And by the time one lays down the little book—little like the torch but great in luminosity—one has caught something of the might and meekness, wisdom and work, love and laughter of the Mahatma. There are a number of beautiful photographs, which have enhanced the value of the book.

G. M.

INDIAN MUSIC : An Introduction : By D. P. Mukherji.

Kutub Publishers, Poona. Price, Rs. 5/-.

ANOTHER book on Indian Music, this time in English, from Dhurjati Prasad's facile pen. Of course the chapter on Indian Music in his English book, *Modern Indian Culture*, may be looked upon as a companion booklet to this one ; both of them taken together would only make up a slender volume comprising eighty pages or so.

The trail of sociology is over them both, as is only befitting for a writer who is also a Professor of Sociology. In fact the chapter in *Modern Indian Culture* is called "The Sociology of Indian Music". And in the Foreword of the book under review, the author frankly admits, "I am not ashamed of the sociological stamp in my treatment of music". Only in the former volume he lays more stress on the social side, and in the latter on the musical side. In the above Foreword he also says, "What was originally intended as an introduction to Indian music mainly for non-Indian readers, has become an essay on the connection between music and the people."

Perhaps it is this sudden veering round of the subject that is responsible for the somewhat sketchy and inadequate nature of the book. If it is meant to convey an idea of Indian music to non-Indian readers, it might have given them the benefit of more illustrations and examples in staff notation, with which the whole of Euro-America is familiar. For after all, music is meant to be demonstrated practically and not explained theoretically. On the other hand, if it is meant to show the sociological background of Indian music, it would traverse very nearly the same ground as the earlier volume mentioned.

As it is, the four short chapters in the book describe (1) the general history of Indian music and the different types of songs, (2) the various classes of Indian ragas and how to differentiate them, (3) how to listen to Indian music, (4) the present condition of Indian music, including critical notes on Tagore and Bhatkhande (also reminiscent of the former book).

I need hardly say that there is much to be learnt from the learned author's discussions, however compressed they may be, for even an Indian like myself, who knows something of Indian music, though not as much as he does, by a long way. But having an innate passion for detail (and perhaps fault-finding ?) I hope to be excused if I point out a few trifles that might have been expressed otherwise.

To begin at the beginning, since the tempered scale of C in a keyed instrument is usually taken as the standard of the *shuddha* scale, as is only natural and proper for various reasons, why does the author in describing the different standard scale obtaining in the South (p. 9) say "in which C sharp and D of the piano would be the second and the third respectively, while G sharp and A would be the 6th and 7th"—thus changing the standard key from C to B all of a sudden, without any apparent reason? Then again, wherever the notes of a scale are referred to by their English names, sharps and flats have been mixed up anyhow. According to the European theory of music, of course single semitones may be called either by their sharp or flat name; but surely in any given scale the accidentals must be called sharp or flat throughout, as the case may be, and not promiscuously one or the other (vide Classification by Notes p. 32). Similarly all *komals* in Bengali should be translated as flats of the same note in English, not as sharps of the previous note—(40) (5) (6) (8) (10).

P. 34. "If *re* is *komal*, (minor) *komal re* is to be used", etc. Why "minor"?

P. 36—"the *sama* or the meeting point, something like a chorus". What likeness even the most far-fetched there can possibly be between the *sama* which is a particular accented beat and the chorus, which is a particular refrain of a song in which many voices join—I fail to imagine.

I must not omit a favourable mention of the songs in notation given at the end. The notation, though unfamiliar to us, has the merit of being easy enough to read at sight, and has come to stay no doubt as far as Hindi All-India songs are concerned. But here too I beg leave to enter a note of dissent on the choice of the one and only example given of Rabindranath's songs. "Kar banshi nishi bhore" may be and is no doubt a very sweet song, but I am afraid the melody is taken from a Hindi song "More kana bhanakua" and is not Rabindranath's own composition.

Indira Devi Chaudhurani





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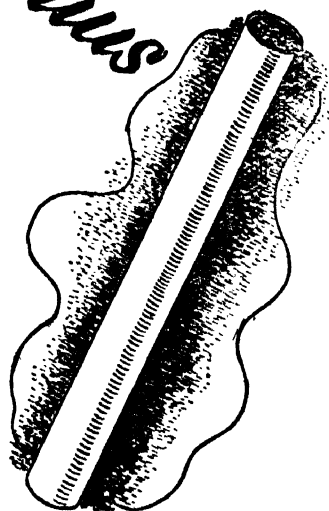
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শ্রীযুক্ত সুধীন চট্টোপাধ্যায়

এচ ১১৪৪ } সে কি ভাবে গোপন রবে
H. 1144 } খেলার ছলে

শ্রীযুক্ত হেমন্ত মুখোপাধ্যায়

এচ ১০৩৩ } পথের শেষ কোথায়
H. 1032 } তোমার আমার এই বিরহের

শ্রীমতী অমিয়া ঠাকুর

এচ ২৭৫ } সমুখে শান্তি পারাবার
H. 975 } হে নতুন দেখা দিক

৩/অমিতা সেন এম-এ. (ধুকু)

এচ ২৬২ } আধেক ঘুমে নয়ন চুমে
H. 262 } ওগো দখিন হাওয়া

শ্রীযুক্ত পঙ্কজ মল্লিক

এচ ৫২৩ } যৌবন সরসী নীরে
H. 523 } গগনে গগনে আপনার মনে

এচ ৮৬৬ } ওগো বধু স্নন্দরী
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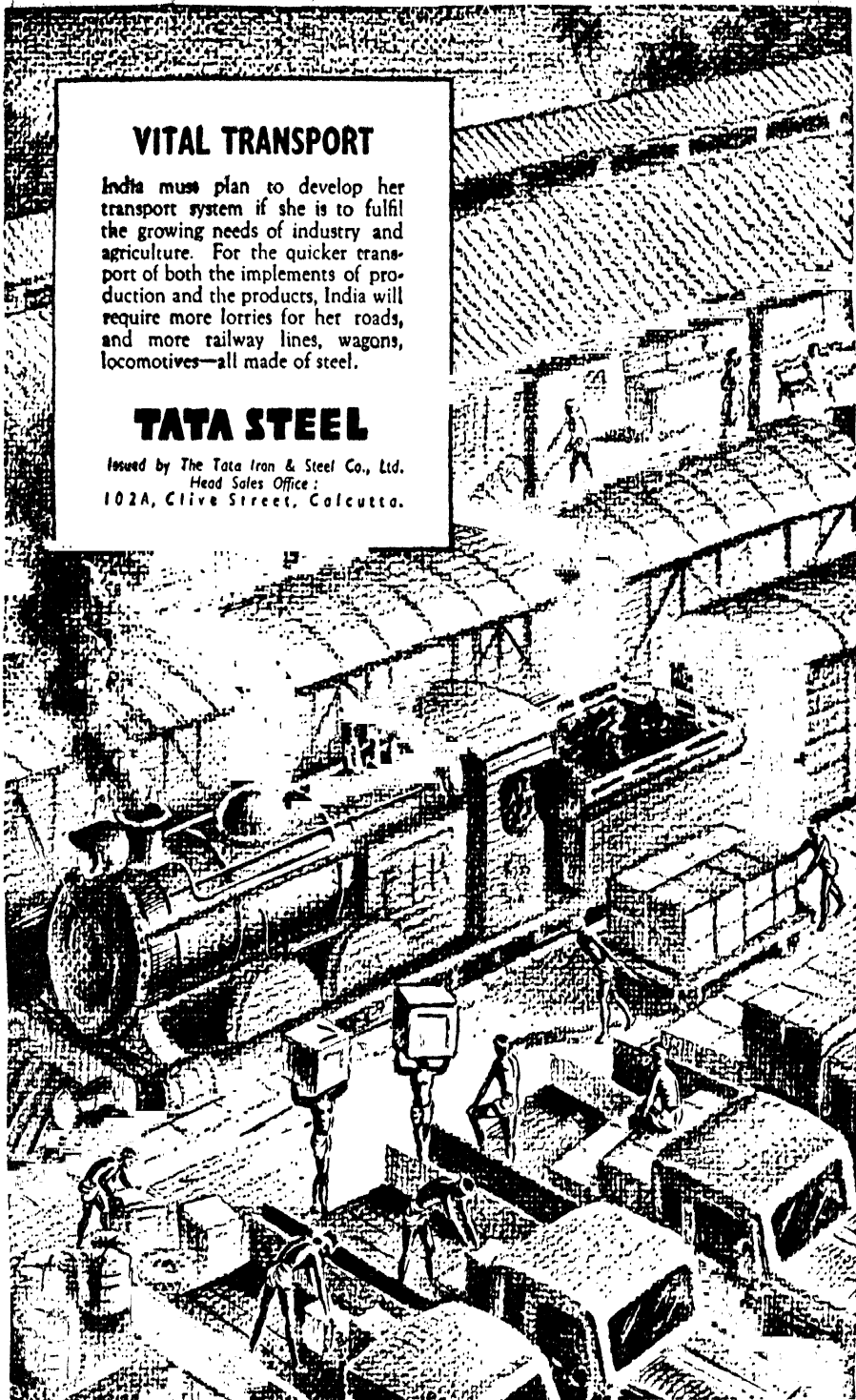
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The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

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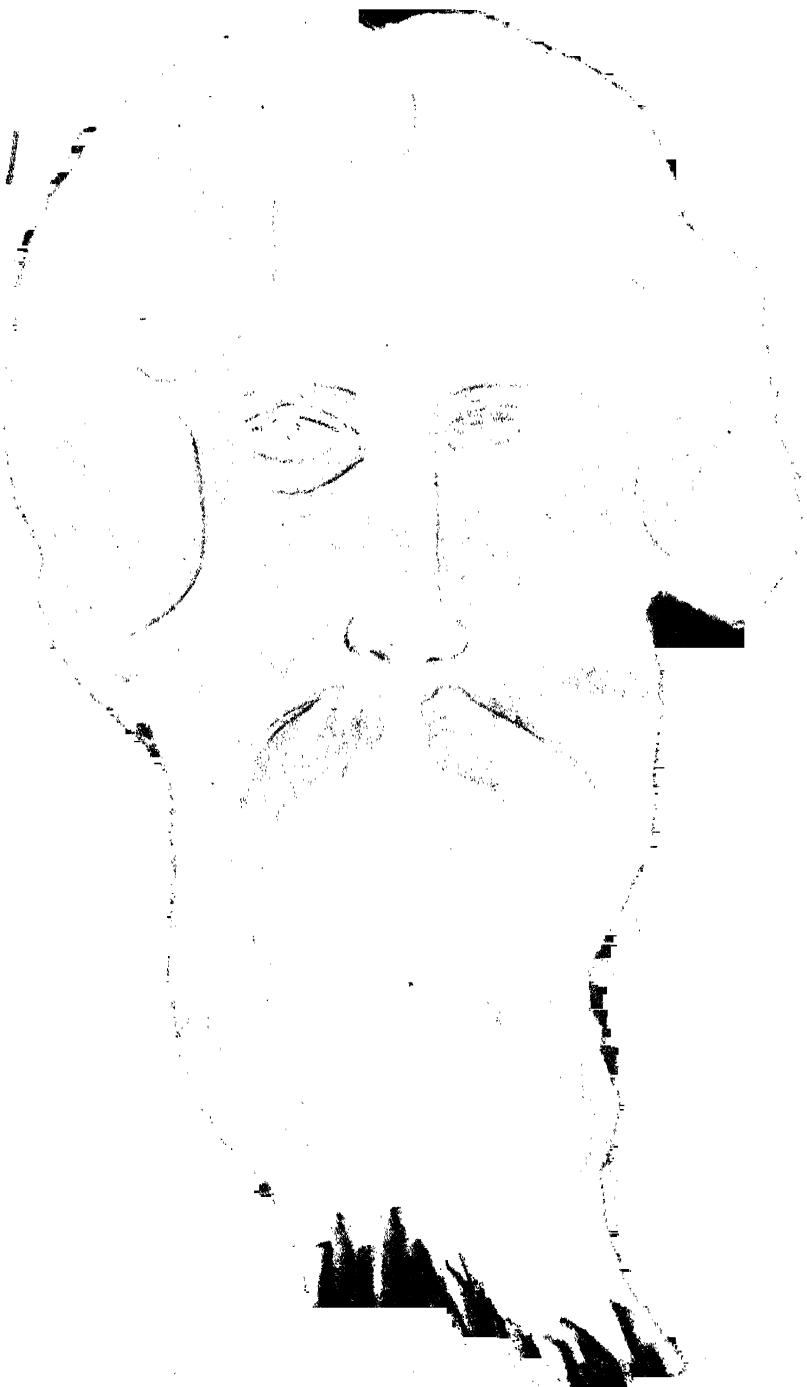
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Self-Portrait
By Rabindranath Tagore

O FIRE, MY BROTHER*

By Rabindranath Tagore

O fire, my brother,
Thy triumph I sing !
Thou breaker of bondage,
Crimson-glowing,
Never was form like thine !
Drunk with what riotous song
Art thou swinging thine arms to the sky ?
What courage of joyous dance ?
No words can tell.

When the prison-term of life is ended, brother,
And the bolt drawn back from the gate,
Then shalt thou burn to ashes
These cords, my hands, these cords, my feet.
Then shall my body, caught up in thy body,
Whirl in that reddening dance ;
All passionate heat be quenched in thy furnace-heat,
And all ills cease.

* A literary English version of the Bengali song *আগুন আমার ভাই* in *Muktadhara*, as incorporated in the translation of the play, by Marjorie Sykes, shortly to be published by the Visva-Bharati—Ed.

the intellect. Rabindranath is ever drunk with dreams ; Pramatha Chaudhuri is incorrigibly sober. Yet Rabindranath, with his all-absorbing mind, found in his younger colleague a model of excellence, an inspiration even, and allowed himself, in the glorious *Sabujpatra* days, to be *directly* influenced by him. This, certainly, is singular honour for Pramatha Chaudhuri, for he is the only one of Rabindranath's juniors of whom this can be said. To influence Rabindranath and not be influenced by him oneself—this sounds fantastic, but is just apposite in this particular case. One feels that Pramatha Chaudhuri would be an alien in Rabindranath's world, whereas Rabindranath would have free access to the Pramathean drawing-room : he would visit, and dine, and linger—though not stay. The perfect guest, he, and Pramatha the perfect host. This guest-host relationship culminated in *Sabujpatra*, whose unstinted hospitality Rabindranath honoured in princely fashion. The green leaf* faded, the lights in the drawing-room grew dim, the Guest, gratified and grateful, had to depart. But to the last day, his respect for Pramatha Chaudhuri's intellect remained undiminished.

II

After taking his Master of Arts degree at the Calcutta University, Pramatha Chaudhuri spent a few years in England. He returned as a barrister, but never practised. Professionalism he shunned, either in law or literature. Private means, ample at that time, formed the necessary background to his life as a man-of-leisure-and-letters. He built up a gorgeous library (of late donated to the Benares Hindu University and Visva-Bharati) ; he read, he smoked, he thought, he wrote. Steeped in French literature, knee-deep in Sanskrit, as much at home in English as in his own language, far and near he fared with zest and discernment, drinking at many springs, gleaning the harvests of centuries and countries, bringing to his own work a vibrant note of world-culture. His house at 20 Mayfair, Ballygunge was an intellectual centre ; Rabindranath came there often, and C. F. Andrews, and other celebrities of the day. He studied art and music, history and philosophy, the geography of India and the Tenancy Act of Bengal. Politics

* *Sabujpatra* ; lit., Green Leaf.

he liked, polemics he loved ; he was interested in sports, ghosts and gossip. Those who matter at once felt that a rare spirit had come to our literature. To those who do not, he was unknown.

Fame came on the trail of *Sabujpatra*, which he founded and edited and burnt a lot of money on. This monthly magazine started as a revolt and soon became an institution. Its name and its green cover suggested that spirit of youth which its pages emanated. Gloriously insouciant, it discouraged both circulation and stability by every possible means : it never printed an advertisement, it appeared at wilful intervals, it reproduced no drawings or water-colours, it published whatever the editor liked and as he liked it. Canons were flouted, conventions defied ; there were no 'features', no eye-catchers, no gadgets or trinkets. The editor and Rabindranath filled more than half the pages, and there was once an issue containing, cover to cover, *nothing* except a very long instalment of Rabindranath's novel, 'Ghare-Baire' (*The Home and the World*). This is the only instance I have known, or heard of, of a magazine coming out with only one 'article' in it. Of course *Sabujpatra* did not live long, it was not meant to. A second series appeared after an interval of some years : the flood rose for a second time, flagged, ebbed, and stopped.

When we think of *Sabujpatra* as unique, we are apt to forget it was like Rabindranath's *Sadhana* in many ways. *Sadhana*, too, with its stubborn chastity, was eminently unsaleable. In those pre-Santiniketan days, when Rabindranath lived in his house-boat on the Padma, alone with his dreams, his prodigious quantities of verse and prose were flung down the corridor of a magazine before they emerged into the great world in final book-form. It had to be so ; that magazine was his link with the outer world. *Sadhana* was his very own, a vehicle for his own *sadhana*, his literary exercises and experiments, a medium for his meditations. Thus was it different from its successor : for while *Sadhana* was really a running anthology of new writings by Rabindranath, *Sabujpatra* founded a school, moulded a group of younger writers, started a movement and saw it through. Inspiration, the cause of *Sadhana*, was *Sabujpatra's* effect. Pramatha Chaudhuri, with his taste, discipline and critical acumen, was the model editor : in the heyday of *Sabujpatra*, his directly personal influence on one set of new writers was irresistible. That he was born to leadership Rabindranath himself had felt and acknowledged ;

it was not personal affection, merely, but literary admiration that made him send his best works of the period to *Sabujpatra*. Two novels, *Chaturanga* and *Ghare-Baire*, appeared in it, the majority of the *Balaka* poems and the prose-poems of *Lipika*, besides plays, short stories, songs. It is possible that the paeans to youth in *Balaka* were written specifically for *Sabujpatra*, and certainly it has the distinction of having published more of Rabindranath's work than any other contemporary periodical within the same span of time.

For yet another reason is *Sabujpatra* memorable : it is the hero in our War of Words. Bengali prose, rough-hewn by Raja Rammohan Roy, polished by Pandit Isvarchandra Vidyasagar, flowered into form with Bankimchandra, who set the standard for the next fifty years or so. The rococo extravagances of his style began to drop off in his own life-time, but the essentials persisted for long after : Bengali prose continued to be written in a manner artificially removed from actual spoken language. It would be accurate to say that it retained traces of the spoken language of the past and of some dialects of the present, and was artificial in as much as it assumed a form not actually spoken in any part of Bengal, even by the most cultivated. This was felt to be a handicap very early in our literary history ; even before Bankimchandra, the Serampore missionaries wrote and printed specimens of Bengali as spoken at that time in South-West Bengal. (This dialect, by the way, because of the overwhelming influence of Calcutta, has formed the base of the standard spoken Bengali of today). The next step in this direction was taken by the author who called himself Tekchand Thakur. He made a brave attempt to give literary status to contemporary common speech, but failed, because he was merely colloquial, and who can be colloquial without being vulgar ? It was that brilliant contemporary of Bankimchandra's, the translator of the *Mahabharata*, the princely lover of literature, Kaliprasanna Sinha, who, in his 'Hutom Panchar Naksha' (*Sketches by an Owl*) first brought literary grace to the spoken tongue. If he had lived reasonably long, the dispute between the two styles might have been settled long ago. But he died unpardonably young, and Bankimchandra was the only author worthy of imitation. His style, known as *sadhubhasha* (the chaste tongue), was adopted by every self-respecting author ; for the style of Hutom Pancha, known as *chalitbhasha* (the current tongue) the world of letters and learning had nothing but contempt.

Rabindranath himself, in his prose fiction and essays, was close on the tracks of Bankim, with Saratchandra in hot pursuit. Prose, in the works of these two, became increasingly vivid and buoyant, but the structure of *sadbubhasha* remained. The main point of contention between the two styles is the verb-conjugation forms* : in *chalit*, they are as actually spoken today by the cultivated classes ; in *sadhu*, as they probably were spoken a few centuries ago and are partly spoken today in provincial dialects. In his earlier fiction, Rabindranath followed Bankim even to the extent of making the characters speak in the 'book'-language. In other words, he sacrificed verisimilitude to convention. Later on, however, he realised this sacrifice to be too great and introduced *chalitbhasha* in dialogues while keeping up the older style in narration. This is the manner accepted by Saratchandra and almost all writers of the last generation—'book'-language for narration and the spoken tongue for dialogues. It is notable that there is only one short novel of Saratchandra written throughout in the spoken tongue.

From the very beginning of his literary life, Rabindranath rebelled at heart against the prim respectability of *sadbubhasha*, though for long he was unable in practice to break away from it. The spoken language strongly attracted him ; he was in love with its music, its colour, its warmth ; he felt in it an abundance of vitality which he hoped to exploit. And he used it in his 'unofficial' writings, in hundreds of letters, in humorous sketches, and—of course—in his plays. When he first visited Europe at the age of eighteen, he sent home a series of letters, later collected and published under the title of *Europe-prabashir Patra*, written in lovely and lively prose—the prose of everyday speech. An air of joyous freedom pervades these letters—freedom from the cold formality of *sadbubhasha*—there is in them a ripple as of bright waters, a sunny playfulness as of young leaves. These qualities Rabindranath cherished, but, for some strange reason,

* The non-Bengali reader may compare the following verb-forms :

	<i>sadhu</i>	<i>chalit</i>
I was going	Ami jaitechhilam	Ami jaochilam
He was doing	She karitechhilo	She karochoilo
She was saying	She balitechhilo	She balochhilo
You will go	Tumi jaibe	Tumi jabe

The advantage is entirely on the side of *chalitbhasha*.

he did not officially adopt the spoken tongue till the appearance of *Sabujpatra*.

He was over fifty then, a Nobel Laureate, and internationally famous. But he had still much more to achieve—how much, nobody at that time could possibly imagine. A revolution in prose style was overdue. Pramatha Chaudhuri, incarnated in *Sabujpatra*, started it, and at once Rabindranath was passionately with him. Of *sadhubhasha* he was getting tired on his own account, he was craving for freedom from its fetters, his long-repressed yearning for the spoken tongue had begun to overcome the force of habit. It was exactly at this juncture that the Green Leaf unfurled its banner, sending out its call for courage. Rabindranath responded as a harp to the wind; he was released. *Chaturanga* was his last novel in the old style, *Ghare-Baire* his first in the new. And that was the end of *sadhubhasha*, so far as Rabindranath was concerned. From that time to the end of his life, he wrote (with the exception of one or two pieces in *Lipika*) nothing in *sadhubhasha* again; every bit of prose was in the spoken tongue, whether essay or story, criticism or Convocation address. His prose, as the years passed, grew sweeter and richer and more harmonious, till, in the last phase, it became infinitely beautiful. It would be a grievous wrong if, in our admiration for his poetry, we ever allow ourselves to forget what a great prose-writer Rabindranath is, what a supreme master of rhythmic prose.

I am old enough to remember the battle I have alluded to as the War of Words, the battle that raged over the new style of prose. The pundits were shocked, their pupils scandalised. *Chalitbhasha* was an object of derision and slander. The Calcutta University, in their examination papers, set passages from Rabindranath asking would-be passers to turn them to 'chaste and elegant Bengali.' Periodicals bristled with controversy. And in this, Pramatha Chaudhuri was the principal figure. He flung himself headlong into the fray; he tilted, he thrust, he parried. He preached, he practised. His serenity was chilling, his frivolity killing. A light-weight Chesterton, a light-hearted Shaw, he had neither the ponderousness of the former nor the latter's frenzy. Throughout the battle, both long and furious, he was always cool—and always deadly. His poise unnerved, his dignity devastated. While opponents foamed and raged,

his voice was suavely conversational. He made fun of pedantry till it was torn to bits ; he turned his artillery of wit against the Castle of Conservatism till it trembled, and tottered, and fell. The battle was won ; once and for all, the spoken tongue was established in literature. It was possible to argue endlessly in theory, but to the dazzling stream of Rabindranath's works there was no reply. The author-baiting University itself quailed. Pramatha Chaudhuri, through his writings and his personality, worked as an incessant stimulus to this Tagorean torrent. Thus was he able directly to influence Rabindranath : so much so that for a brief period, Rabindranath was infected by the Pramathean characteristic of puns and other verbal tricks—his *Sabuiipatra* stories have a greater measure of them than his prose before or after. And his influence on later writers has been both wide and deep, if judged by the quantity and quality of recent prose written in the spoken tongue. More and more writers are taking more and more to it, and there are many living today who write in nothing else. To those who maintained that *chalitbbasha*, permissible in fiction and light literature, is unthinkable in 'serious' works, a crushing reply has been given by both Rabindranath and Pramatha Chaudhuri who have written in it on philosophy, philology, physics and the agrarian problem—the former magnificently, the latter deliciously. Even now newspapers, text-books and works labelled 'research' are clinging to *sadhubbhasa* : conventions die hard. But they do die—life would have stopped if they did not—and a time may come when everybody will look upon *sadhubbhasa* as what is : a museum specimen. After all, the influence of literature on language is far stronger than that of either newspapers or school-masters.

III

Pramatha Chaudhuri is an aristocrat among writers. In the crowd he never is, too far from the crowd he never wishes to be. He is an amused spectator to the drama of life, unruffled and aloof, laughing at folly and philistinism, a high-priest of civilised values. The essay, naturally, is the form he glories in. Like G. K. Chesterton and Max Beerbohm, he succeeded in inventing a form half-way between the essay and the short story, and even in his unquestionable short stories he has often given

brilliant commentaries on the drama rather than scenes from the drama itself. His stories are never tales, though often they are 'yarns', and splendid ones. Stories of character, of psychology, of 'atmosphere', of pure merriment—we come across these as we read on in his *Galpasamgraha* ; we meet delightful liars and rogues, eminently companionable ghosts, women of rare beauty, youths carved out of animated bronze, cranks, parasites, charlatans. Though provokingly modern in his essays, his stories are of old-world romance, of dangerous living and abounding animal spirits. Two cities, Calcutta and London, figure in his stories, the latter more vividly than the former, but the ambience he loves best is that of Bengal's landed gentry, still retaining some traces of court-life—the spacious world of unearned incomes, rather than the constricted one of clerks and tradesmen, is the proper, or should one say the improper, background for his reckless fancy. In respect of both character and setting, he is attracted by the out of the way : the scene is often laid in odd corners, in railway trains, in hotels and along the road. Interested neither in action nor in narration, he never misses a chance of telling his story in dialogue. The First Person Singular inevitably comes in, but this again, is not a protagonist, but a spectator ; it is rather like the unobtrusive, impersonal 'I' of Maupassant who does not even tell the story, but merely listens. For the mystery of life, the mastery of passion and man's unconquerable dreams, we shall not go to his stories : what they reveal is not that life, as we live it everyday, is wonderful, but that reality is strange. They are airy without being dreamy, witty without being comic, conscious, critical, but not intolerant. Above all, the best of them are little masterpieces in form.

Perfection in form he has always sought. His work stands in sharp contrast to the mass of loose, slipshod, incoherent prose and verse which, for some time, fairly choked our literature. From the day of his first appearance in print, he put forth a style that was firm and quiet and clear, furthest removed from eloquence and nearest to the ideal where conversation becomes an art. Order he has valued all his life, and precision, and balance ; and these qualities are as manifest in his essays as in his stories. He has Oscar Wilde's weakness for epigrams and paradoxes, though neither the suffocating sensuousness nor the hypnotic word-music of the English prose-poet.

His best work has an icy sparkle which is meant for the head, but certainly not to go to it. This congenital detachment has made of his verses (for he has written some) interesting experiments in technique; if he had taken seriously to the poetic craft, he would have been rather like his beloved Bharatchandra—a master-artificer. As Bharatchandra's special gift showed itself in his graceful adoption of Sanskrit metres, so has Pramatha Chaudhuri delighted in foreign forms—the French sonnet, the dainty triolet, the complicated *terza rima*. In his essays, too, there is a certain coldness, for he sees things as they are and leaves them at that. He analyses, but hardly draws conclusions. Nothing in the world would induce him to forsake the stage-box for the pulpit. To quote his own words, he is 'not sad because mankind is bad, but unhappy because it suffers.' Well has he learnt the French lesson that 'the most civilised way of being sad is to be humorous.'

Humorous he certainly is, but it would be fatal to call him a humorist. Nothing is more alien to him than the Dickensian roar of laughter. The comic implies the dramatic, but for Pramatha Chaudhuri, as has been already suggested, the play is *not* the thing, but merely the material. A satirist he might have been, but is not, though he excels in irony, and can send sarcasm home. He lacks moral passion; he is not tormented by hunger for a better world; no savage indignation lacerates his heart. And there can be no satire without these. He is well pleased with himself, and content, on the whole, that the world is what it is. Not expecting much from humanity, making full concessions for frail flesh, he is never bored or bitter, ecstatic or despairing. He maintains an uniformly cheerful disposition, and is the apostle of good cheer, good sense—and good writing.

More than any other thing, Pramatha Chaudhuri is an artist in words. All his life he has shown an exemplary awareness of the fact that writing is an art. An art: how much that little word implies writers themselves do not often know. The means that leads to art is known as craft, and craft has to be mastered first of all, and each time anew. And that is a long and nerve-racking process. One has to work hard. One has to think. One has to wait. It is possible to have craft without art, but not art without craft. Pramatha Chaudhuri has been one of the most delicate and sensitive exponents of word-craft. To

write well, to make every sentence flawless, every word unalterable, to say just what one wants to, and in the most attractive form—that has ever been his ideal, and this, as every writer who pursues perfection knows, is mortifyingly difficult to achieve, and can only be approached from time to time with talent, industry and luck. Pramatha Chaudhuri's uncompromising fastidiousness in this direction has created one of the most luminous pages of our literary history. Like Rabindranath, though to a lesser degree, he has the art making an art of all things, of criticism, of controversy, of trifles, even. His *Bharat-barsher Geography*, his *Prachin Hindusthan*—these are literature much more than geography or history. To read and re-read him is an education in practical literature, for he teaches the simple truth that good writing is supremely more important than 'plot' or 'ideas' or 'social import'.

In a sense, he is an author for authors. Though canonised in select circles, Pramatha Chaudhuri has never been 'popular'. The apogee of his career synchronised with that of Saratchandra Chatterji—but how different, how significantly different the nature of the receptions accorded to the two. Saratchandra was a rage, a craze, an idol; Pramatha Chaudhuri an intellectual vogue. Saratchandra was even a fetish, Pramatha Chaudhuri even a fashion. Saratchandra was devoured by everybody, Pramatha Chaudhuri was studied by the cultured. There were meetings to pay homage to Saratchandra; Pramatha Chaudhuri was invited to preside. The honour meant for the one was to be endorsed by the other. The one endeared himself so much that he could not be praised too much or too often; the other was too important to be praised at all. Eulogies of Saratchandra consumed reams of paper; about Pramatha Chaudhuri not a word was spoken. With the exception of Dr. Amiya Chakravarty's excellent estimate of his short stories, I have not to this day come across a single serious study of Pramatha Chaudhuri—nor, for that matter, a commonplace magazine-article airing the 'ah's and 'oh's of criticism. . . . But perhaps it is better that it is so: let him dine late, but let the room be well-lit, and the company few and well-chosen.

It was not until 1941 that the long-contemplated public reception was given to him—public only in name, for only the elite was interested. The most notable thing about the event was that Visva-Bharati commemorated it by bringing out his 'Galpasamgraha'

(*Collected Stories*) with a foreword by Rabindranath. Otherwise, it was a quiet and rather a melancholy event, for the shadow of Rabindranath's death still lay heavy on us. A few months later, the Japanese war broke out, bringing unanticipable repercussions on the life of Bengal. . . . Santiniketan was a 'safe' place. And there Pramatha Chaudhuri has been living since then, a recluse, a refugee—for it is not in him to look upon Santiniketan as his spiritual home. He has written little of importance in recent years, and little except autobiographical anecdotes. The house he lives in is called, after one of Rabindranath's books, *Punashcha*, which means 'Postscript' or 'Yet Again'. This name, for Pramatha Chaudhuri now, is doubly meaningful. He will certainly come back, and come to his own, he is certainly one of those to whom we shall ever return. But will he yet add a postscript to his life-long work? Cold common-sense echoes, 'Will he?' Hope whispers, 'Perhaps'.



MODERN POETRY

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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I HAVE been asked to write something about modern English poets. It is by no means an easy task. For who will define the limit of the modern age with reference to the almanac?—It is not so much a question of time as of spirit.

After flowing straight on for a time, the river takes a sudden turn. Literature likewise does not always follow the straight path. When it takes a turn, that turn must be called modern. Let us call it “*adhunik*” in Bengali. The modernity depends not upon time but upon temperament.

The poetry to which I was introduced in my boyhood might have been classed as modern in those days. Poetry had taken a new turn, beginning from the Poet Burns. The same urge had brought forth many other great poets, such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats.

The manners and customs prevalent in society are known as social usage. In some countries these social customs completely suppress all the freedom and variety of individual taste. There man becomes a puppet, his conduct conforms meticulously to social etiquette. It is this traditional and habitual way of life that society appreciates. Sometimes literature also falls into a groove for long periods ; and whosoever wears the sacred marks of perfect literary style, is looked upon as a saintly person. During the age of English poetry that followed Burns, the barriers of style were broken down, and temperament made its debut. “The lake adorned with lotus and the lily” is a lake seen through the special hole of official blinkers fashioned in the classic workshop. When a daring writer removes those blinkers and catch-phrases and looks upon the lake with open eyes, he also opens up a path through which the lake assumes manifold aspects to many eyes and various fancies. But classic judgment cries “fie for shame” on him.

When we began to read English poetry, this unconventional

individualistic mood had already been acknowledged in literature, and the clamour raised by the Edinburgh Review had died down. Be that as it may, that period of our life was a new era of modernism.

In those days, the hall-mark of modernism in poetry was the individual's measure of delight. Wordsworth expressed in his own style the spirit of delight that the realised in Nature. Shelley's was a Platonic contemplation accompanied by a spirit of revolt against every kind of obstacle,—political, religious or otherwise. Keats' poetry is wrought of the meditation and creation of beauty. In that age, the stream of poetry took a turn from outwardness to inwardness.

The deepest feelings of a poet's heart strive to attain immortality by assuming a lovely form in language. Love adorns itself. It seeks to prove its inward joy by its outward beauty. There was a time when humanity in its moments of leisure sought to beautify in various ways that portion of the universe with which it came into contact. This outer adornment was the expression of its inner love. Where there is love, there can be no indifference. In those days, in the exuberance of his sense of beauty man began to decorate the common articles of daily use. His inner inspiration lent creative power to his fingers. In every land and every village household utensils and the adornment of the home and person bound the heart of man, in colour and form, to these outward insignia of life. Many were the ceremonies evolved by man for adding zest to social life ; many the new melodies, new arts and crafts in wood and metal, clay and stone, silk, wool and cotton. In that age, the husband designated his wife as his "beloved disciple in the fine arts". Then it was not the bank-balance that constituted the principal asset for the married couple in the work of setting up house,—the arts were a more necessary item. Flower-garlands must not be woven anyhow, young women knew how to paint the ends of their *saris* of China silk, skill in the art of dancing was especially taught, and was accompanied by lessons in the *vina*, the flute and singing. There was spiritual beauty then in human intercourse.

The English poets with whom we came into contact in my early youth, saw the universe with their own mind's eye ; it had become as it were their personal property. Not only did their own imagination, opinions and tastes humanise and intellectualise the universe, but they moulded it according to the heart's desire of each

individual poet. The universe of Wordsworth was specially Wordsworthian, of Shelley Shelleyan, of Byron Byronic. By force of creative magic it became the reader's universe also. The joy that we felt in that particular poet's world, was the joy of tasting the hospitality of that particular world's aroma. The flower sends its invitation to the bee through its distinctive scent and colour, and sweet is that note of invitation. The Poet's invitation also possessed that spontaneous charm. In the days when the chief bond between man and the universe was one of individuality, the personal touch in the invitation had to be fostered with care, a sort of competition had to be set up in dress and ornament and manners, so as to show oneself off to the best advantage.

Thus we find that in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tradition which held priority in English poetry of the previous age had given place to self-expression of the individual. And this is what was called modernism in those days.

But nowadays that modernism is dubbed Mid-Victorian senility and made to recline on an easy-chair in the next room. Now is the day of the harsh modernism of lopped skirts and lopped hair. Not that powder is not frequently applied to the cheeks and rouge to the lips, but it is done in public, with unashamed bravado. It is proclaimed that the days of illusion are over. There is illusion at every step of the Creator's creation, and it is the variety of that illusion which plays so many tunes through so many forms. But science has thoroughly examined its every pulse-beat, and declares that at the root of things there is no illusion ; there is carbon and nitrogen, there is physiology and psychology. We old-fashioned poets had taken illusion to be the main thing and these to be the by-products. And therefore we must confess we had striven to compete with the Creator in spreading the snare of illusion through rhyme and rhythm, language and style. In our allusions and suggestions there was some play of hide-and-seek, we were unable to cast aside that veil of modesty which adorns the truth, while it does not contradict it. In the coloured light that filtered through its filmy haze, the dawns and evenings appeared to us in a beauty that was as tender as that of a new bride. The modern Duhshashan,* engaged in

* One of the Kaurava brothers (Mahabharata) who tried to insult Draupadi (queen of the Pandavas) by disrobing her in public.

disrobing publicly Draupadi the universe, is a sight we are not accustomed to. Is it mere force of habit that makes us feel uncomfortable? Is there no truth behind this sense of shame? Does not Beauty become bankrupt when divested of the veil which conceals not but reveals?

But the modern age is in a hurry, and has no time. Livelihood has gained the upper hand of life. Man has to race through his work and rush through his pleasures in the midst of a crowd of accelerating machines. The human being who used to create his own intimate world at leisure, now delegates his duties to a factory and rigs up some sort of provisional affair on the spur of the moment to suit his needs, according to some official standard. Feasts are gone out of fashion, only meals remain. There is no urge to consider whether life is in harmony with the mind or not, for the mind of man is engaged along with the crowd, in pulling the rope of the huge Juggernaut car of livelihood. Instead of music, there issue from his throat hoarse shouts of "Push, boys, push!" He has to spend most of his time in the company of the crowd, not in the world of his own fellows. His mentality is the mentality of the hustler. In the midst of all this bustle he has not the will power left to bypass ugliness unadorned.

Which path must poetry now follow then, and what is to be her destination? It is not possible nowadays to follow one's own taste, to select, to arrange. Science does not select, it accepts whatever there is as existing; it does not appraise it by the standard of personal taste nor embellish it with the eagerness of personal attachment. The chief delight of the scientific mind consists in curiosity, not in forming ties of relationship. It does not regard what I want as the main point, but what the thing in itself exactly is,—leaving me out of the question; and without me, the preparation of illusion is unnecessary.

Therefore, in the process of economising that is being carried out in the department of poetry in this scientific age, it is adornment that has suffered the biggest cut. Finicky selectiveness in the matter of rhyme, rhythm and words is now become almost obsolete. And the change is not taking place smoothly, but in order to break the spell of the past, it has become the fashion to repudiate it aggressively. It is like trying to set bits of broken glass on the top

in an uncouth and ugly manner, lest the selective faculty by force of habit should enter the house by jumping over the garden-wall. A poet writes—I am the greatest laugher of all, greater than the sun, than the oak-tree, than the frog and Apollo. “Than the frog and Apollo”,—this is where the bits of broken glass come in. For fear someone should think that the poet is arranging his words sweetly, prettily. If the word “sea” were used instead of “frog”, the modernists might object to it as regular poetising. That may be so, but mentioning the frog is by a long way much more regular poetising of the opposite kind. That is to say, it is not introduced naturally, but is like treading on your toes intentionally. That is the modern fashion.

But the fact of the matter is, the days are gone when it was generally accepted that the frog could not be admitted into genteel poetry on the same footing as other creatures. In the category of reality, the frog belongs to a higher class than Apollo. Nor do I wish to regard the frog with contempt. What is more, in an appropriate context, the croaking laugh of the frog might be juxtaposed with the laugh of the poet’s beloved, even if she objected. But even according to the most ultra-scientific theory of equality, the laugh that is the sun’s, that is the oak-tree’s, that is Apollo’s, is not that of the frog. Here it has been dragged in by force, in order to destroy the illusion.

The veil of illusion must be removed and the thing must be seen exactly as it is. The illusive dye which coloured the things of the nineteenth century has now become faded, and its mere suggestion of sweetness is not enough to satisfy one’s hunger,—something tangible is required. When we say the smelling is half the eating, then we exaggerate by nearly three quarters. Let me translate a few lines from a poem addressed to a beauty of bygone days. It would be out of place to introduce any charm into the translation, also useless to try and do so.

You are beautiful and faded,
 Like an old opera tune
 Played upon a harpsichord ;
 Or like the sun-flooded silks
 Of an eighteenth-century boudoir.
 In your eyes
 Smoulder the fallen leaves of outlived minutes,
 And the perfume of your soul
 Is vague and suffusing,
 With the pungence of sealed spice-jars.

Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colours.
My vigour is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet,
Gather it up from the dust
That its sparkle may amuse you.

This modern coinage is cheaper but it is stronger, and it is very definite ; it clearly sounds the modern note. Old-fashioned charm has an intoxicating effect, but this has insolence. There is nothing misty about it.

The subjects dealt with by modern poetry do not seek to attract the mind by their charm. Then what lends it support ? Its strength consists in its firm self-reliance, that which is called character in English. It calls out : Ho there ! behold me, here am I. That same poetess, whose name is Amy Lowell, has written a poem on a shop of red slippers. The theme is that in the evening snowflakes are whirling in the wind outside ; whilst inside, behind polished glass windows, rows of red slippers hang like garlands, "like stalactites of blood, flooding the eyes of passers-by with a dripping colour, jamming their crimson reflections against the windows of cabs and tramcars, screaming their claret and salmon into the teeth of the sleet, plopping their little round maroon lights upon the tops of umbrellas. The row of white sparkling shop-fronts is gashed and bleeding,—it bleeds red slippers". The whole poem deals with these slippers.

This is what is called impersonal. There is no ground for being particularly attached to these garlands of slippers, either in the capacity of a buyer or a seller. But one has to stop and look ; as soon as the character of the picture as a whole becomes apparent, it no longer remains trifling. The gleaners of meaning will ask—"What does it all mean, my dear sir ? Why so much ado about slippers, even if they are red ?"—To which one replies—"Just look at them yourself."—"What's the good of looking ?" To which there is no reply.

There is a poem by Ezra Pound about Aesthetics. The theme is this. A girl was walking along the street, and a little boy in patched clothes cried out in uncontrollable excitement, "Oh ! look, look, how beautiful !" Three years later, the poet met the same boy again. That

year there was a big haul of sardines. His father and uncles were laying out the fish in large wooden boxes, in order to send them for sale to the market of Breschia. The boy was jumping about handling the fish, so his elders scolded him and told him to keep quiet. Then the boy, stroking the neatly-arranged fish, muttered to himself exactly the same words in a tone of satisfaction—"How beautiful !" On hearing this "I was mildly abashed", the poet says.

The pretty girl and the sardine fish, look upon them both and don't hesitate to make the same remark in the same words,—How beautiful ! This observation is impersonal, pure and simple looking ; even the slipper-shop is not outside its purview.

In the nineteenth century poetry was subjective in character, in the twentieth it is objective. Hence emphasis is now laid on the realism of the subject-matter, not on its adornment ; for adornment expresses the individual's taste, but the power of pure reality consists in expressing the subject itself.

Before making an appearance in literature, this modernism had imposed itself on painting. By creating various forms of disturbances, it sought to contradict the idea that painting was one of the fine arts. The function of art is not to charm but to conquer the mind, it argued,—its sign is not beauty but truth. It acknowledged not the illusion of form but its character,—that is to say, the self-advertisement of the whole. This form has no other introduction of itself to offer ; it only wants to proclaim loudly the fact that it is worth observing. This strong case for being observed is made out not by appeals of gesture and posture, not by copying nature, but by its own inherent creative truth. This truth is neither religious nor moral, nor ideal—it is only natural. That is to say, it must be acknowledged, simply because it has come to exist—just as we acknowledge the peacock together with the vulture, just as we cannot deny the existence either of the pig or the deer.

Some are beautiful, others ugly, some are useful, others harmful ; but there is no possible pretext for discarding any one from the sphere of creation. It is the same with literature and art. If any beauty has been created, it needs no apology ; if not, if it possesses no innate strength of being, only sweetness,—then it must be rejected.

Hence present-day literature that has accepted the creed of

modernity, scorns to keep caste by carefully adjusting itself to bygone standards of aristocracy : it does not pick and choose. Eliot's poetry is modern in this sense, but not Bridges'. Eliot writes :*

The winter evening settles down
 With smell of steaks in passage ways.
 Six o'clock.
 The burnt out ends of smoky days.
 And now a gusty shower wraps
 The grimy scraps
 Of withered leaves about your feet
 And newspapers from vacant lots ;
 The showers beat
 On broken blinds and chimney pots,
 And at the corner of the street
 A lonely cab-horse steam and stamps.
 And then the lighting of the lamps.

Then comes a description of a muddy morning filled with the smell of stale beer. On such a morning, the following words are addressed to a girl :

You tossed a blanket from the bed,
 You lay upon your back and waited ,
 You dosed, and watched the night revealing
 The thousand sordid images
 Of which your soul was constituted.

And this is the account given of the man :—

His soul stretched tight across the skies
 That fade beyond a city block,
 Or trampled by insistent feet
 At four and five and six o'clock :
 And short square fingers stuffing pipes, .
 And evening newspapers, and eyes
 Assured of certain certainties,
 The conscience of a blackened street
 Impatient to assume the world.

In the midst of this smoky, this muddy, this altogether dingy morning and evening, full of many stale odours and waste papers, the opposite picture is evoked in the poet's mind. He says :—

* This and the following extracts are from T. S. Eliot's *Preludes*.

I am moved by fancies that are curled
 Around these images, and cling ;
 The notion of some infinitely gentle
 Infinitely suffering thing.

Here the link between Apollo and the frog is broken. Here the croaking of the frog in the well hurts the laughter of Apollo. It is clearly evident that the poet is not absolutely and scientifically impersonal. His loathing for this tawdry world is expressed through the very description he gives of it. Hence the bitter words with which he ends the poem :

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh ;
 The worlds revolve like ancient women
 Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

The poet's distaste for this old dung-gathering world is evident. The difference from the past consists in this, that there is no desire to delude oneself with an imaginary world of rosy dreams. The poet makes his poetry trudge through this mire regardless of his laundered clothes ; not because he is fond of mud, but because in this muddy world one must look at mud with open eyes, and accept it. If Apollo's laugh reaches one's ears even there, well and good : if not, then one need not despise the loud leaping laughter of the frog. That is also something ; one can look at it for a moment in the context of the universe, even for this thing there is something to be said. The frog will seem out of place in the cultured language of the drawing-room : but then most of the world lies outside the drawing-room.

The first awaking in the morning. In that waking there is first the realisation of oneself, the newly-born stirring of consciousness. This condition may be called romantic. This newly-awakened consciousness sallies forth in order to test itself. The mind gives form to its own thoughts and desires in the universe and in its own creations. It seeks to express its inmost desires outwardly in various illusive forms. Then the light grows harsher, experience becomes harder, many veils of illusion are torn aside by the turmoil of life. In this unshaded light and unclouded sky one becomes acquainted with a clearer reality. This familiar reality is greeted by different poets in different ways. Some look upon it in a doubting and rebellious spirit, some look upon it with such contempt that they do

not hesitate to treat it rudely and coarsely. Again even in the uncovered form as revealed in the hard light, some perceive a deep mystery—they don't think there is nothing esoteric, that there is nothing beyond and beneath appearances. In the last European war man's experience was so harsh and so cruel, all the manners and decencies that had come down through the ages were so suddenly destroyed in the fatal conflict, that the established order of society in which he had so implicitly and complacently believed for such a long time, was torn to tatters in a single moment. On seeing the revolutionary destruction of all the manners and morals in which he had hitherto found refuge, man began to find a fierce delight in despising everything that he had considered respectable, as being a sign of weakness and a means of artificial self-deception. He has now come to look upon universal cynicism as a regard for truth.

But if modernism has any philosophy, and if that philosophy is to be called impersonal, then one must admit that this attitude of aggressive disbelief and calumny towards the universe, is also a personal mental aberration owing to the sudden revolution. This also is an illusion, in which there is no serious attempt to accept reality naturally in a calm and dispassionate frame of mind. Many people think that this aggressiveness, this wantonly destructive challenging is what is called modernity.

I myself don't think so. Even though thousands of people are attacked by influenza to-day, I shall not say that influenza is the natural condition of the body in modern times. The natural bodily state exists behind influenza.

If I am asked what exactly pure modernism is, then I shall answer that it consists in looking upon the universe, not in a personal and self-regarding manner, but in an impersonal and matter-of-fact manner. This point of view is bright and pure, in this unclouded vision there is real delight. In the same dispassionate way that modern science analyses reality, modern poetry also will look upon the universe as a whole,—this is what is eternally modern.

But it is nonsense to call this modern. The joy of this natural and detached way of looking at things belongs to no particular age. It belongs to everyone whose eyes know how to wander over this naked earth. It is over a thousand years since the Chinese poet

Li-Po wrote his verses. He was a modern, he looked upon the universe with freshly-opened eyes. In a verse of four lines he writes simply :

Why do I live among the green mountains ?*
 I laugh and answer not, my soul is serene :
 It dwells in another heaven and earth belonging to no man.
 The peach trees are in flower, and the water flows on....

Another picture :

Blue water.....a clear moon.....
 In the moonlight the white herons are flying.
 Listen ! Do you hear the girls who gather water-chestnuts ?
 They are going home in the night, singing.

Another

Naked I lie in the green forest of summer.....
 Too lazy to wave my white-feathered fan.
 I hang my cap on a crag,
 And bare my head to the wind that comes
 Blowing through the pine trees.

A river merchant's wife writes :

I would play, plucking flowers by the gate ;
 My hair scarcely covered my forehead, then.

You would come, riding on your bamboo horse,
 And loiter about the bench with green plums for toys.
 So we both dwelt in Chang-kan town,
 We were two children, suspecting nothing.

At fourteen I became your wife,
 And so bashful I could never bare my face,
 But hung my head, and turned to the dark wall ;
 You would call me a thousand times,
 But I could not look back even once.

At fifteen I was able to compose my eyebrows,
 And beg you to love me till we were dust and ashes. . . .

I was sixteen when you went on a long journey.
 Travelling beyond the Ken-Tang gorge,
 Where the giant rocks heap up the swift river,
 And the rapids are not passable in May.
 Did you hear the monkeys wailing
 Up on the skyey height of the crags ?

Do you know your footmarks by our gate are old,
 And each and every one is filled up with green moss ?
 The mosses are too deep for me to sweep away ;
 And already in the autumn wind the leaves are falling.

The yellow butterflies of October
 Flutter in pairs over the grass of the west garden.
 My heart aches at seeing them. . . .
 I sit sorrowing alone, and alas !
 The vermilion of my face is fading.

Some day when you return down the river,
 If you will write me a letter beforehand,
 I will come to meet you—the way is not long—
 I will come as far as the Long Wind Beach instantly.

In this poem the sentiment is not pitched in a high key, neither do we find any suggestion of ridicule or disbelief levelled against it. The subject is extremely familiar, yet there is no lack of feeling. If the style was given a sarcastic twist and it was held up to ridicule, then the thing would be modern, because the moderns scorn to acknowledge in poetry that which everybody acknowledges naturally. Most probably a modern poet would have added at the end of this poem that the husband went his way after wiping his eyes and looking back repeatedly, and the girl at once set about frying dried prawn fish-balls. For whom ?—In reply to this query there are a line-and-a-half of asterisks. The old-fashioned reader would ask, "What does this mean ?" The modern poet would answer "Things happen like this". "But they also happen otherwise". "Yes, they do, but that is too respectable. Unless it stinks a little it doesn't shed its refinement, it doesn't become modern". The poetry of olden times had its luxury, which was bound up with courtesy. Modern poetry also has its luxury, which is the luxury of rotten meat.

Juxtaposed with the Chinese poem, the modernism of English poets strikes one as unreal. It is befouled. Their mind nudges the

reader with its elbow. The universe that they see themselves and show to others is cracked, full of rubbish and blowing with dust. Their mind to-day is unhealthy, unhappy and disordered. Under these circumstances they cannot cleanly dissociate themselves from the universal aspect of things. They laugh loudly at the straw-and-bamboo framework of the broken image and say that the real thing has been discovered at last. They think that prodding at the lumps of clay and bits of sticks and straw and saying harsh things about them is acknowledging truth with vigour.

Apropos of this, a poem of Eliot's comes to mind. The theme is : An old woman dies, who belongs to a high family. The customary blinds are drawn down, the undertakers and coffin-bearers are engaged in making their appropriate arrangements. On the other hand, in the dining room the head-butler of the family is sitting at the dinner-table with the second maid on his knees.

The thing is credible and natural no doubt. But people of an old-fashioned temperament will be prompted to ask—Is that enough ? What is the urge to write such a poem, and why should I read it ? If any poet writes to tell me of a girl's charming laughter, then I shall agree that this is news worth giving ; but if immediately afterwards I find a description of how the dentist arrives and discovers by means of his instruments that the girl's teeth are decayed, then I must say that this is also news no doubt, but not of a kind that need be proclaimed from the house-tops. If I find that somebody is specially anxious to spread this news, then I shall suspect that his temperament is also decayed. If it is argued that formerly poets used to pick and choose subjects for their poems, whereas ultra-modern poets do not,—then I cannot admit that ; they also pick and choose. Choosing a faded worm-eaten flower is as much choosing as choosing a fresh flower. The only difference is that the moderns are always afraid lest people should give them a bad name and say they are fond of choosing.

The *Aghorepanthis** purposely eat disgusting food, and use foul things, lest it should appear that they are partial to nice things ; as a result, they become habitually partial to things the reverse of nice. If the *Aghorepanthi* cult becomes prevalent in poetry, then what will

* ▲ Saiva sect,

become of those who have a natural taste for clean things? The leaves and flowers of some plants are continually attacked by insects, others again are not;—must we boast of being realists because we give precedence to the former?

A poet has described an aristocrat thus :—

When Richard Cody went to town*
 We pedestrians used to stare at him.
 He was a gentleman from top to toe,
 Slim like a prince,
 Simple in his ways, simple in his dress.
 But when he said good-morning, our pulse used to beat faster.
 He walked abroad in a radiance.
 He was exceedingly rich.
 His manners were charming.
 Whatever we saw in him made us think—
 Oh, how I wish I were he.
 But when we were working ourselves dead,
 Waiting for the lamps to be lit,
 When there was no meat for dinner,
 When we cursed the coarse bread,—
 Then on a calm spring night,
 Richard Cody went home
 And sent a bullet through his head.

There is no modern sarcasm or loud laughter in this poem; on the contrary, there is some pathos in it, which consists in the fact that there may be some fatal disease lurking inside what is apparently healthy and beautiful.

He whom we consider rich has a starving personality hidden behind the curtain. The anchorites of old times have spoken in the same way. They remind those who are living that one day they will have to go to the burning-ground slung on bamboo-poles. European monks have described in their discourses how the decomposed body beneath the soil is being eaten by worms. In dissertations on morality we have seen attempts to destroy our illusion by reminding us that the body which seems to us beautiful is a repulsive compound of bones and flesh and blood and fluids. The best way of cultivating detachment is repeatedly to instil into our minds a contempt for the

* This is a literal retranslation from the Bengali version given in the essay. We regret that we are unable to trace the original English.—Ed.

reality which we perceive. But the poet is not a disciple of the detached hermit, he has come here to side with attachment. Is the modern age so very degenerate that even this poet is infected with the atmosphere of cremation, that even he begins to take pleasure in saying that that which we consider great is decayed, that which we admire as beautiful is untouchable at the core ?

Those whose minds have grown old are incapable of strong and pure natural feeling. Their mind becomes impure and unhealthy. It tries to shake off its lethargy by contrariness, it excites itself with all that is unnatural and fermented ; only by shedding its shame and decency can it make the stream of laughter flow through its wrinkles.

The mid-Victorian age felt a due respect for reality and wished to accord it a place of honour ; the modern age thinks it part of its programme to insult reality and tear aside all its veils of decency.

If you call an exceeding reverence for universal things sentimentalism, then you can also call an aggressive spirit of rebellion against them by the same name. If the mind becomes bitter, for whatever reason, the vision can never be natural. Hence if the mid-Victorian age is to be ridiculed as being the leader of ultra-respectability, then the Edwardian age must also be ridiculed with the opposite adjectives. The thing is not natural and therefore not perennial. As for science, so for art, the detached mind is the best vehicle. Europe has gained that mind in Science, but not in literature.

POEMS OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

By SISIR KUMAR GHOSE

LIKE so many other writers Aldous Huxley began "as one of our younger poets." *The Burning Wheel* and *The Defeat of Youth* were published in 1916 and 1918 respectively. Since 1931 he has not published any poems. Thus his poetry belongs to what might be called the early period. Excepting a handful of well-known pieces, like *The Alien*, *The Cicadas* and *The Fifth Philosopher's Song*, it has not received nor deserved much attention. There is probably more poetry in his prose than in his poems. Yet these poems contain brief and interesting expressions of aspects of his mind and sensibility.

What strikes the reader at once is the division between the young poet and the world of action and common humanity. Loneliness, separation and a sense of insecurity are chronic with him. *The Life Theoretic* is the apt title of one of his early poems.

While I have been fumbling over books
And thinking about God and the all,
Other young men have been battling with the days
And others have been kissing the beautiful women.
They have brazen faces like battering rams.
But I who think about books and such
I crumble to impotent dust before the struggling,
And the women palsy me with fear.
But when it comes to fumbling over books
And thinking out God and the Devil and all,
Why, there I am.
But perhaps the battering rams are in the right of it,
Perhaps, perhaps. . . God knows.

This is fairly representative : books, women, physical desire, aversion, attraction, awkwardness, theology, the closing pyrrhonism, the Huxley charivari in a word.

The aesthetic bibliophile comes out more openly in *Poems* :

Books and a coloured skein of thought were mine :
And magic words lay ripening in my soul
Till their much-whispered music turned a wine
Whose subtlest power was all in my control.

These things were mine, and they were real for me
 As lips and darling eyes and a warm breast ;
 For I could love a phrase, a melody,

Like a fair woman, worshipped and possessed.
 I scorned all fire that outward of the eyes
 Could kindle passion ; scorned, yet was afraid ;
 Who saw the bright earth beckon and obeyed.

The first two stanzas reveal and emphasise his isolation from, and fear of, the realities of life, also his absorption in the aesthetic modes of experience and expression.

The life theoretic of the University wit is concomitant with that of the decadent poseur.

If I can't think strangely, I can at least look queerly,
 So I grew the hair so long in my head
 That my mother wouldn't know me,
 Till a woman in a night-club said,
 As I was passing by,
 "Hello, here comes Salome."

I looked in the dirty gilt edged glass
 And, oh Salome—there I was—
 Positively jewelled, half a vampire,
 With the soul in my eyes hanging dizzily,
 Like the gatherer of proverbial samphire
 Over the brunt of the crag of sense,
 Looking down from perilous eminence
 Into a gulf of windy night.
 And there's straw in my tempestuous hair,
 And I'm not a poet : but never despair !
 I'll madly live the poems I shall never write.

(*Complaint of a Poet Manqué*)

This is as nearly ninetyish as can be expected outside the period, and lends some support to the opinion that a comparison may be drawn between the poetry of the decadents and that of Aldous Huxley. There is the same desire to 'shock,' the same straining after effect, the penchant for 'style,' the affinity with the French. *Higher Sensualism* speaks of pilgrims journeying across a mountain path, and how the strain and the ritual of counting the beads become a sensual fillip. It leads them "to face Heaven's eminence,

new stimulated, new inspired." *Revolution* sets out the delights of the body with greater gusto and detail.

At your mouth, white and milk-warm sphinx,
I taste a strange apocalypse :
Your subtle taper finger tips
Weave me new heavens, yet, methinks,
I know the wiles and each iynx
That brought me to your lips ;
I know you bare as laughter strips
Your charnel beauty, yet my spirit drinks
Pure knowledge from this tainted well.
And now hears voices yet unheard
Within it, and without it sees
That world of which the poets tell
Their vision in the stammered word
Of those that wake from piercing ecstasies.

The "iynx," the "tainted well" sound like period pieces. The influence of Lafourge, Mallarme, Rimbaud, and oft-quoted Baudelaire can be felt in many of his poems. Yet these influences while they have sharpened his sensitiveness to feeling and language somehow remain acquired characteristics. They are not fully domiciled in his mind and spirit. His heart and soul are keyed to different notes. For instance, in *Waking* the dawn, instead of showing up the mean and small, the pain and ugliness,

Shines also on your face and brings
All its dear beauty back to me
In a new miracle of birth.

The poem is to be valued for distinguishing the romantic Huxley from his French models.

Along with the bookish and decadent attitudes there is in Huxley from the beginning interest in what he has called in one of the short stories *The Great Outdoor*. It is precisely his theoretic meandering among "the Best that has been Said and Thought" which has given him the zest for outdoor life. He seizes upon Nature as a fresh repository of sensations and as an environment in which to merge his personal identity. Some of these poems offer his version of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. But even his best poems, with their laboured finish, can hardly be called lyrics. They lack that abandon

and spontaneity without which a lyric is self-condemned. For instance,
The Flowers :

Day after day,
 At Spring's return,
 I watch my flowers, how they burn
 Their lives away.

The candle crocus
 And daffodil gold
 Drink fire of the sunshine—
 Quickly cold.

And the proud tulip—
 How red he glows
 Is quenched ere summer
 Can kindle the rose.

Purple as the innermost
 Core of a sinking flame,
 Deep in the leaves the violets smoulder
 To the dust whence they came.

Day after day,
 At Spring's return,
 I watch the flowers, how they burn
 Their lives away,
 Day after day...

It has an imagist quality, an intensity of glow and colour, which are yet in a strange way conscious of their transience, like the hues of sunset. The pauses—"quickly cold" and "how rich it glows" augment the sense of decay and smouldering, while the refrain is well managed. But the suspicion remains that it is a prose emotion fitted into a poetic frame, an artificial green thought.

Nature provides a background where on to display his varying moods. A slow aethereal movement pervades *The Elms*, where

Fine as the dust of plummy fountains blowing
 Across the lanterns of a revelling night
 The tiny leaves of April : earliest growing
 Powders the trees...

There is hush in *Summer Stillness*

The stars are golden instants in the deep
 Flawless expanse of night : the moon is set :

The river sleeps, entranced, a smooth cool sleep
 Seeming so motionless that I forget
 The hollow booming bridges, where it slides,
 Dark with the sad looks that it bears along,
 Towards a sea whose unreturning tides
 Ravish the sighted ships and the sailors' song.

"Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep ! The river glideth at his own sweet will. . . ." The influence of Wordsworth, in spite of his repeated thrusts against that poet, is unmistakable. In his own words, it is in the "scenes of the mind" that he is interested. And as scenes of *his* mind the descriptions form part of wider philosophical and speculative considerations :

Sometimes in lands where mountains throw
 Their silent spell on all below,
 Drawing a magic circle wide
 About their feet on every side,
 Robbed of all speech and thought and act,
 I have seen God in the cataract.
 In falling water and in flame,
 Never at rest, yet still the same,
 God shows himself.

(*Scenes of the Mind*)

It is from Nature again, though *via* Blake and Lawrence, that he derives his theory and practice of Life-worship. "All his learned doubts" about "the lost purpose and the vanished good" are swept aside by the endless chirping of the cicadas, by their hymn of life. They point out to him a source of *elan*, of non-intellectual creative energy and fulfilment :

Again, again, with what insensate zest !
 What fury of persistence hour by hour !
 Filled with what devil that denies them rest,
 Drunk with what source of pleasure and power !

Life is their madness, life that all night long,
 Bids them to sing and sing, they know not why ;
 Mad cause and senseless burden of their song ;
 For life commands, and Life ! is all their cry...

Now in my empty heart the crickets' shout
 Re-echoing denies and still denies

With stubborn folly all my learned doubt,
In madness more than I in reason wise.

Life, life ! The word is magical. They sing
And in my darkened soul the great sun shines
My fancy blossoms with remembered spring
And all my autumns ripen on the vines...

Clueless we go : but I have heard thy voice,
Divine Unreason ! harping in the leaves
And grieve no more, for wisdom never grieves
And thou hast taught me wisdom : I rejoice !

Enthusiasts have overpraised *The Cicadas*. Apart from its theme, which is no simpler and grander, no more modern and dignified than Wordsworth's 'sermon it stones', the verse itself rings false. Huxley is posing to be more moved than he actually is. The last words of the poem, "I rejoice !" are forced and unduly dramatised. What he says about Lawrence's "prolongation of loudness" in propagating "the supremacy and the rightness of the blood," applies equally to this poem and its 'philosophy.' The poem as a whole is an *ersatz*, a too deliberate escape into irrational modes of being.

Nature does not merely provide him with a creed of life-worship, it had, at an earlier stage of his poetic career, stirred his mind towards an isle of the blessed, the ideal. In *The Reef* he expresses his *weltschmerz* :

Yes, I shall seek that reef, which is beyond
All isles, however magically sleeping
In tideless seas, unchartered and unconned
Save by blind eyes : beyond the laughter and weeping

That brood like a cloud over the lands of men.
Movement, passion of colour and wings,
Curving it to out like knives—these are the things
I search for—passion beyond the ken

Of our foiled violences, and more swift
Than any blow which man aims against time,
The invulnerable motion, that shall rift
All dimness with the lightning of a rhyme,

Or note, or colour. And the body shall be
Quick as the mind ; and will shall find release

From bondage to brute things : and joyously
Soul, will and body, in the strength of triune peace,

Shall live the perfect grace of power unwasted,
And love consummate, marvellously blending
Passion and reverence in a single spring
Of quickening force, till now never yet tasted,

But ever ceaselessly thirsted for, shall crown
The new life with its ageless starry fire.
I go to seek that reef, far down, far down
Below the edge of everyday's desire,

Beyond the magical islands, where of old
I was content, dreaming, to give the lie
To misery. They were all strong and bold
That thither came ; and shall I dare to try ?

Though this is but a mood, the mood of an idealist, the statements and the final interrogation are sincere. The doubt if he would go on the journey, "to seek that reef," arises again in a smaller poem, *Midsummer Day* :

If one had courage, did one dare to do
That which alone might kill what now defaces,
This the one place of all the countless places,
The only day when one will never dare !

"Shall I dare to try ?" That final impression of his verse is, however, one of daring, of a deliberate and desperate choice in the face of difficulties.

It is not till we reach *Orion*, and the majesty of the heavens, that the note of moral urgency is heard. The theorists have cut up and reduced man to the level of an automaton. Creation is possible only with a new access of freedom. Huxley looks upon *Orion* as a symbol of what the mechanist outlook has done to the universe. He makes a plea for the freedom of man's will in shaping his life to ideal conditions and fulfilment. This attitude is an advance on his earlier adoration of sheer energy in the chirping cicadas. This poem, rather than *The Cicadas*, can make some claims to dignity and strength.

And yet, for all the learned lords of Dung,
The choice is ours, the choice is always ours,

To see or not to see the living powers
 That move behind the numbered points and times.
 The Fly King rules ; but still the choice remains
 With us his subjects ; we are free, are free
 To love our fate or loathe it ; to rejoice
 Or weep or wearily accept ; are free
 For all the scouring of our souls, for all
 The miring of their crystal, free to give
 Even to an empty sky, to vacant names,
 Or not to give, our worship ; free to turn
 Lifewards, within, without, to what transcends
 Or not to turn ; yes, free to die or live ;
 Free to be thus and passionately here,
 Or otherwise and elsewhere ;
 Free, in a word, to learn or not to learn,
 The art to think and musically do
 And feel and be, the never more than now
 Difficult art harmoniously to live
 All poetry . . .

The choice is always ours. Then let me choose
 The longest art, the hard Promethean way
 Cherishingly to tend and feed and fan
 That inward fire, whose small precarious flame,
 Kindled, or quenched, creates
 The noble or ignoble men we are,
 The world we live in and the very fates,
 Our bright or muddy star.

The ethical assertion recorded here is, however, incidental. It is like the sudden and aggressive determination of a person who is his own worst enemy, and whose nature is to vacillate. His divided mind scorns, yet is afraid, and envies those more deeply wise who see the bright earth beckon and obey. His attitude towards beauty and physical desire is an illustration of this conflict. "The earthly paradise, the earthly paradise ! With what longing, between the bars of my temperament, do I peer at its bright landscape, how voluptuously sniff at its perfumes of hay and raspberries, of honeysuckle and roast duck, of sun-warmed flesh and nectarines and the sea ! But the bars are solid ; the earthly paradise is always on the further side. Self-hindered, I cannot enter and make myself at home.

No doubt, the landscape seemed all the brighter to me for that inability, the life of the senses all the more paradisiacal."

But the paradisiacal life of the senses is also a "tainted well." *The Alien* sets forth this division in his personality with sharp precision.

A petal drifted loose
 From a great magnolia bloom,
 Your face hung in the gloom,
 Floating, white and close.
 We seemed alone : but another
 Bent o'er you with lips of flame,
 Unknown, without a name,
 Hated, yet my brother,
 Your one short moan of pain
 Was an exorcising spell :
 The devil flew back to hell ;
 We were alone again.

The imagist opening of the poem is no less remarkable than its continued suggestions and variations of movement, and, finally, its epigrammatic close. A sentimentalism may be detected between the lines.

The body is an allurements, but with another part of the mind, the some poet wishes to "find release from bondage to brute things." For the "brute things" dim the "sheer beauty." In *Perils of the Small Hours* :

Sheer beauty, then you seemed to stir
 Unbodied soul ; soul sleeps to-night
 And love comes, dimming spirit's sight,
 Whon body plays interpreter.

When "body plays interpreter" it does not allow the experience of the not-self. But the poet has also known this "fellow ship with essence :"

I am no more . I have become a part
 Of that great earth that draws a breath and stirs
 To meet the spring.

(*Poems*)

Our gusty passions, our burning wills,
 Dissolved in boundlessness, and we
 Were almost bodiless, almost free.

(*Anniversaries*)

There is a country in my mind . . .
 Where matter is no more a prison,
 But freedom for the soul to know
 Its native beauty.

(Italy)

At times the tortured mind expresses itself, and finds relief, in bits of self-dramatisation, in rather easy recourse to self-pity. His rational mind cannot reconcile itself to the miseries and disharmonies of life, which break in upon his otherwise cloistered mental world. Unlike God, when Huxley looks round on the world he does not find it good at all. Perhaps the malady is a continuation of the nineteenth-century attempts to reconcile the facts of science with the fiction of a benevolent deity :

Failing sometime to understand
 Why there are folks whose flesh should seem
 Like carrion puffed with noisome steam,
 Fly-blown to the eye that looks on it,
 Fly-blown to the touch of a hand,
 Whizzing along on little trollies,
 With long long arms like apes'.
 Failing to see why God the Topiarist
 Should train and curve and twist
 Men's bodies with such fantastic shapes . . .
 Yes, failing to see the point of it all, I sometimes wish
 That I were a fabulous thing in a fool's mind,
 Or at the ocean bottom, in a world that is deaf and blind,
 Very remote and happy, a great goggling fish.

(Topiary)

A few poems are satiric, but their satire is not so effective as that of his prose writings. The failure has many reasons. To begin with, Huxley is rarely sure of himself or of his audience, and satire flourishes in a homogeneous society. It probably works best in a mind that is hard and narrow, and it may be doubted if Huxley as a poet is a satirist at all. An eye for the absurd he has ; he can play the cynic, only too easily. But these qualities do not make a satire. His war poems, for instance, are satiric only in bits. *The Theatre of Varieties* is his only prolonged satire in verse. He pillories the typical circus performance, its pandering to sensationalism, the need for excitement which Babbitt feels and so easily succumbs to. First, he

draws, with firm outlines, and warm animation, the interior world of the circus tent. One almost feels the heat, hears the noises and the mingled voices. The words have a sharp stringency and the picture lurid.

Circle upon circle the hanging gardens descend.
Sloping from upper darkness, each flower face
Open, turned to light and laughter and life
Of the sun-like stage. And all the space between,
Like the hot fringes of a summer sky,
Is quick with trumpets, beats with the pulse of drums.

This is the setting, and is soon followed by the actual, the inevitable performance. When the magician brings back the dead to life :

Shout upon shout, the hanging gardens reverberate.
Happy because the irremediable is healed,
Happy because they have seen the impossible,
Because they are freed from the dull daily law,
They shout, they shout.

There is gusto and malice in the satire but its scope and vision are limited. It is almost journalistic.

It would be surprising if the poems of Aldous Huxley did not reflect the scientific interests of their author. The science poems are, however, few in number, and even if "the scientific words come naturally to Huxley's pen," his attempts to put across scientific similes and metaphors are not always successful. For instance,

Unearthly lightnings leap across the sky
Like sudden sperm and die and leap again.

(*Storm at Night*)

The "stunning" simile is dead, stone dead. It has never leapt. In one of his later critical essays Huxley permits two uses of science in poetry : one is what he has called the "modification of existence-patterns," and the other is ironic. It may be doubted if his poems achieve either.

"Poetry and science : a marriage has been arranged—again and again, in the minds of how many ambitious young men of letters'. But either the engagement has been broken off or else, if consummated, the marriage was fertile only of abortions."

His analysis is rich in dramatic irony. In the case of this ambitious young man of letters there has been a divorce, but not before a few abortions had already resulted. One of the major motives of these poems seems to be to startle; another, to attempt a new kind of metaphysical poetry. We cannot however ignore the undertone of discomfort, and self-consciousness, which takes the edge off the irony. The discomfort, mixed with dramatised self-pity, comes out more fully in *The Fifth Philosopher's Song* :

A million, million spermatozoa,
 All of them alive
 Out of their cataclysm but one poor Noah
 Dare hope to survive.

And among the billion minus one
 Might have changed to be
 Shakespeare, another Newton, a new Donne,
 But the One was Me.

Shame to have ousted your betters thus,
 Taking ark while the others remained outside !
 Better for all of us, froward Homunculus,
 If you'd quietly died.

It is not easy to see the real intention of the poem or the nature of its ambiguity.

Most of Huxley's poetical work then belongs to his earliest period, to attitudes long abandoned or modified. It is the work of a psychologist who dabbles in the refinements of civilisation and of perversity. Most of it is adolescent stuff. There is a tendency to shock, to be rather ninetyish. The fumbler of books is, however, acutely alive to the transient beauty of nature. See the poignant lines :

A truce to summer and beauty and the pain
 Of being too consciously alive among
 The things that pass and the things that remain,
 (Oh, equal sadness !) the pain of my young being.

The distress with which the world about him fills his mind, "the pain of my young being," leads him to erect a glass house. This weakens

his verse. Yet, with his "own spirit's dark discouragement" he occasionally feels a compensatory urge towards life and action :

And action bears us onward like a stream
Past fabulous shores, scarce seen in our swift course
Glorious—and yet its headlong currents seem
But backwaters of some diviner force.

(*Stanzas*)

This too gives way, though how or why it is not quite clear, to a higher and moral insistence on the freedom of man's will. The ultimate choice for being "our bright or muddy star," is ours. And the bright star is, Huxley tells us, "the never more than now difficult art harmoniously to live." It is with this vague recommendation and the personal acceptance of it that he abandons poetry as a medium for his ideas and emotions. From now on he relies on novels and essays for self-expression. Probably cousin Huxley had felt that he would never be a poet.



THIS WAR-TIME POETRY

By MANOJ KUMAR CHATTERJEE.

THE publication of anthologies and individual poems is, we may well believe, indication of a poetic renaissance. This is a time for epic, for the lifting of hearts no less than for the shedding of tears over doomed men and hopes foredone. Poetry can draw spiritual ecstasy from the evil that menaces, the forces that seek to overthrow our heritage. Now we are face to face with a fateful hour and youth has arisen from oblivion to touch the stars. Transcendental themes abound again for the poetic vision.

Complaints are often made that the poetry which has been produced in this war is not reflective and philosophical. Those who make that complaint generally forget that reflective poetry of the Miltonic, Wordsworthian, even Hardy-esque kind is impossible in a totalitarian War. Moreover, as Stephen Spender has pointed out, there is need for a poetry of generally shared suffering and generally shared hope. There is a need, he says, "for the Ode, the Poetry of the people conscious of salvation and willing to alter their ways and dedicate themselves to a changed life."* We cannot have a poetry of this sort unless society is prepared to pay some price for its integrity of vision. Poets of this War are doing valuable service by maintaining that integrity, and the absence of deep philosophy from their writing for the time being can easily be condoned.

The temper of the poetry that has so far been published during this War differs, inevitably, from that of the first world war. A sense of frustration, of decay and disease, hangs heavily upon the minds of the poets. Visions of anarchy and chaos have possessed their souls !

"The storm rises,
The thunderbolt falls,
The walls fall, tearing down
The fragile life of the interior.
The cherishing fire in its grate
Consumes the house, grown to a monster,

* Letter to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Feb. 20, 1948.

As though the oat had turned into a tiger
Leaping out of a world become a jungle
To destroy its master."*

The times are tragic enough, and one at least of the poet's tasks is to mirror the tragedy of human existence. Thus, in G. S. Fraser's 'Apology of a Soldier',

"Death like a fluorescent screen
Isolates on the image called memory
Dumb sockets, angles of bone,
And suoks the living nerves from history"

All is finished, thinks David Gascoyne ; the "last nail has consummated the inhuman pattern," and the veil is torn ;

"All is now withdrawn ; void yawns
The rock-hewn tomb. There is no more
Regeneration in the stricken sun,
The hope of faith no more,
No height, no depth, no sign,
And no more history."

This, according to the modern war poets, is the situation we are now placed in. Flood is upon us : the people are become "shells emptied of delight" and are broken on the wheels of despair. As J. F. Hendry says :

"Man's heart alone asserts death's insignificance ;
The sun's hour halts. Time is one vast cloud,
Joys even in giant endeavour crack like bells
Despite tongue's eloquence."

The controlled rhetoric with which these poets direct their moral indignation against the forces of death takes on an apocalyptic grandeur.

This pessimism is not without other causes. The last Great War, at least in its earlier phase, was a War of volunteers, whereas the present War, far more deadly and devastating than the last, is a war of conscripts. Moreover, the last War was fought at least with some purpose ; men like Rupert Brooke, Julian Grenfell, Charles Sorley, Alfred Noyes, saw that War as a crusade against the forces of tyranny

* *The Fates. Ruins & Visions*—Stephen Spender

and barbarism and flung themselves into it in a spirit of romantic idealism. They viewed War as a quickener of the pulse of human existence. That attitude has changed ; very few poets have actually supported the present War. Very few know what they have actually fought for. Herbert Read (i) and Stephen Spender (ii) make articulate these ideas that surge in the minds of the soldier-poets. Says Spender :

"I lay down with a greater doubt
That it was all wrong from the start :
Vistory and defeat both the same,
Hollow masks worn by shame
Over the questions of the heart.
I lay down dead like world alone
In a sky without faith or aim
And nothing to believe in,
Yet an endless empty need to atone"

This is the feeling which most of the soldier-poets fighting in the present War have shared and from which they can seldom escape.

But the real merit of these young poets lies in the fact that they are not altogether plunged in despair. Beleaguered by negation, they are still trying to show an 'affirming flame'. The turning point of history, so they think, must come, man's long journey through the night of pain must end so that he may live once again in an atmosphere of reason and sanity. In this context the dialogue between *Kyrie* and *Lachrymae* from David Gascoyne's most moving poem "Miserere" repays careful perusal :

Kyrie : How can our hope ring true ? Fatality of guilt
And complicated anguish confounds time and place,
While from the tottering ancestral house an angry voice
Resounds in prophecy. Grant us extraordinary grace
Oh spirit hidden in the dark in us and deep
And bring to light the dream out of our sleep.

Lachrymae : Slow are the years of light : and more immense
Than the imagination. And the years return

(i) To a Conscript of 1940

(ii) June—1940—*Ruins and Visions*.

Until the unity is filled. And heavy are
The Lengths of Time with the slow weight of tears.

The 'years of light' although slow are not very distant ; they are still within the range of the poets' vision. The tide is sure to turn, unless indeed, as G. S. Fraser says, our hopes are just illusions like our fears. The task of poetry remains, even in the direst times, to transform discord into music. By imagination we may hope to redeem the world from chaos, and see it flooded by light and love : There is a world within secure from conquest, and the poets are thrown back on that interior fortress as never before. There even in pain they may find a hoarded beauty. There is the ultimate spring and harvest time where all that aching humanity has hoped for can still seed and grow. They feel that dream world as a reality to-day, no less than the reality of the guns :

"Our proper place
Is now our proper selves. The only hope
For man is still man though mankind be cursed." (i)

All that they can do meanwhile is to resign themselves to their fate and wait for the storm to pass. Courage and acceptance are the things that matter, for to understand is to endure. "I accept, I accept" exclaims Captain Alan Rook, "for there lies all our power, the power of the young and the lonely". Here is neither the rebellious, peevish mood of Sassoon nor the emotional mood of Rosenberg, but one which in the school of suffering has learnt stoicism and patience. The burden of their poems might be the Duke's words in "Measure Measure" :

'Be absolute for death ; either death or life
Shall thereby be the sweeter.'

But the deepest characteristic of these verses is the 'silent desire to unite with life, so long ignored by the selfish' (Alan Rook). In this respect they are more introspective than the poems of the last War. Very few poems by Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sasson and Isaac Rosenberg were directly concerned with the crisis of civilisation ; they were more concerned with the pity and horrors of War. Therefore, at a time when human beings are urged again, as a condi-

(i) *Fear No more* : A book of poems for the present time by living English poets (Cambridge University Press). The contributors to this anthology have chosen to remain anonymous.

tion of life, to recognise the beauty of Robots and Atom Bombs, these young poets are inviting us to realise afresh the function of poetry in the salvaging of civilisation. They are making us aware of the glorious possibilities of our lives : in the words of Stephen Spender, they are once more "reminding men of the meaning and dignity of life" (i) With Auden, they may boldly declare :

"The lights must never go out

The music must always play." (ii)

War, according to them, should not only be fought to a finish, it should be thought to a finish as well. They are, thus, serving a two-fold purpose ; they are maintaining contact with reality by accepting the accidents of time in a spirit of serene resignation, and they are also devoting their minds to the preservation of the precious heritage of humanity overwhelmed by the deluge.

Some of the best work in this war-time poetry has been done by Richard Church, a civilian. Already famous for his association with the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. Church has reached his full stature during this war and has still promise. His 'Twentieth Century Psalter' is a notable attempt in verse to wring from the tortures of the last four years a meaning that can resolve the conflict of fate and doubt. Opening with an evocation of the shattered cities and countrysides of Europe, it shows the individual man stumbling forward over the ruins to the promised land, the author's aim being to trace the course of the spiritual conflict through bitterness, disillusion and uncertainty to a new access of joy and restored faith. "I will sing a new song" he exclaims and then goes on to say :

"I have awakened and have seen my fellows

Waken like me, upon their haunted pillows,

To find the morning eloquent with joy

Fullness of heart that overflows in faith,

Simplicity of mind, a vision of truth

Such as the saints had when religion was young,

And they, in martyrdom, rose up and sang." (iii)

(i) *Life and the Poet*—Stephen Spender p. 18

(ii) September, 1, 1939—*Another Time* : W. R. Auden p. 118.

(iii) From 'A Twentieth Century Psalter'—Richard Church—*The Times Lit. Suppl.*

The war poems of David Gascoyne give one the impression that Gascoyne has been trying to 'live down' his Surrealist period. He is becoming more intelligible and intellectual. He meets successfully the rival claims of magic and matter in poems like 'A War-Time Dawn' and 'Miserere', one of the most powerful poems ever written on the present crisis :

'The turning point of history
Must come. Yet the complacent and the proud
And who exploit and kill may be denied—
Christ of Revolution and Poetry—
The resurrection and the life
Wrought by your spirit's blood.' (*Miserere*)

Mr. Nicholas Moore, who belongs to the 'Apocalypse' group, is becoming better and better, though he has not yet found himself. There is promise for the future in his latest verses, 'The Cabaret,' 'The Dancer', and 'The Gentleman'. He sees from his "windy speech no heaven, for I am a ghost of a shadow under a dream". Many of the poems in his latest collection are elegies, yet out of all these elegies will come "the high-heaving ecstasy of birth, a new world, a new time". Meanwhile, the safest shelter lies in the arms of the beloved where the contemplative man may retire when he fails to grasp the sorry scheme of things entire :

'Love can take its minute, and wish for one more
Hug against the rattling cold, one more kiss,' (i)

The group of love-poems associated with the name of Priscilla bring out this attitude of the poet.

The book of verse entitled 'Until Now' and a few stray poems in anthologies confirm the position of Ruthven Todd as one of the most original poets of the time. His reaction to war is unlike that of his fellows. It is marked by nostalgia for the past and a resentful hopelessness for the future. His desire to evade the present is clearly marked in lines like these :

'It is easier to sail paper-boats on lily ponds
To plunge like gannet in the sheltered sea,

To go on walking or chatter with my friends
 Or to discuss the rare edition over tea,
 Than to travel in the mind to that place
 Where the map becomes reality...' (i)

The war poems of J. F. Hendry show a gravity and a power of direct statement as well as a maturity of vision. They are all poems of sustained intensity and strangely vivid imagery. Mr. Hendry meets the horrors of his day with a firm harsh strength. His moral indignation is well controlled and is not allowed to play havoc with the technique of his verse :

'Flood-tides, returning, may bring with them blood and fire
 Blenching with wet panic spirit that must be rock...
 May bring a future tossed and torn as slippery as wrack,
 All time adrift in torrents of blind war'. (ii)

The future he sees in a haze of images sharpening into truth :

'Though death lies all around
 Like lichen on a moat,
 From the frozen tongue, still lolling,
 Flows the living speech of the soul' (iii)

There is real poetic impulse and lyrical gusto in many of the poems of Francis Scarfe, specially in 'Sunday Leave', 'Parachutists', 'Barcarolle', 'Ballad of the Safe Area', and in his latest collection, 'Forty Poems and Ballads'. These are enough to show that the thrust of his mind which can penetrate deep is not insensitive to delicacy and enchantment :

'But though I shall never win that pureness lost,
 I share the grace of these flowers to see them bloom
 And feel, wherever the rose grows, there is home.' (iv)

In his poems he has, as he himself says, 'expressed varying attitudes'. He is torn between despair at the present and hope for the future. 'Barcarolle' and 'Ballad of the Safe Area' give a picture of the 'world in systematic ruin'. But though often ironic and even cynical, he does not lack in positive faith. "A world fit for "a child must come of this"—this is his final verdict on the present cataclysm.

- (i) It was Easier.
- (ii) London before Invasion.
- (iii) A Winter of War
- (iv) Sunday Leave

The poems of Tom Scott, who used to be a stone-mason before the outbreak of the war, have variety, range and swing. They seem to come red-hot from the anvil of his agonised consciousness and are characterised by a naive quality unspoilt by intellectualism. In 'Poem in Three Movements' he attains an almost cosmic vision and apocalyptic grandeur; it is the most moving poem he has written so far. 'Sea-dirge' is well compact and the maximum of effect is produced with the minimum of words.

In sheer grandeur of vision and the moving quality of the verses, Captain Alan Rook, author of 'Soldiers', 'This Solitude' and 'These are my Comrades', stands supreme among the young poets who are writing during this war. None of them has his stature, his mastery of impression and meditative insight. Nothing could better illustrate the mentality of the war-generation of poets than his poems 'Dunkirk Pier', 'Poems near Bethune' and 'For Christopher'. They are all master-pieces of controlled movement in which this crescendo of world-massacres and all its disquietude and distemper are faithfully reflected. In them find expression the true tragic vision and the genuine desire of the heart for fulfilment. In suffering lies his strength (See *The Retreat*), in acceptance his courage :

'No, there can be to the vanquished no wish
For surrender, for the landed fish no hope
Of another spawning. The heart that is
Failing knows that its days
Of participation are over. Then let us
Gladly, with the resolute courage of the broken,
Not fondly, not idly, embrace
Our future decision...
Accept the accident of our time
A modern, scientific miracle.' (i)

'Dunkirk Pier' reflects a deep uneasiness for the future and our right to determine it; "Can we...dare with puny words support a future which belongs to others? We who taught hate, expect them to love?" ; it is a severe indictment of our personal failure to direct our lives to a better end in the past. But he has other moods besides this; he has his visions of the future and the spring. Earth may yet stand to greet the spring, filled with "terrific promise of the flower" ;

(1) *Poem from Headquarters—Poetry Review*, Jan-Feb., 1942.

Even the tired are elated. In spring. In the promise
 Of that which the eye discerns like smoke on the horizon.
 Lost, lost in the present
 Into the future our thoughts are returning.
the dangerous quiet dream
 Of the past has left the mind
 And tired eyes regain their lustures.' (i)

The untimely deaths of Captain Alun Lewis and Richard Spender of the Parachute Battalion have removed from the scene of action two figures of magnitude and significance. There was real promise in their writings ; and although they were cut off in the prime of their lives, they enlarged the function and scope of poetry. Mr. Lewis had a grim and tragic vision :

'Convulsed, I saw the stars reeling outside my window, the Sword flashing
 and the plough wrecked in the branches ;

And through the barred grating I clamoured for relief ; for sunlight wrapped
 in an envelope, for a day's dole ;

And I signed my name on God's register with quivering fingers. (ii)

This is superb poetry ; the heightened vision unfolds life's meaning. The world is full of 'pale, frustrated ghosts' and death haunts and scorches all. The poems from 'Raiders' Dawn', his most powerful book of verse, are occupied with thwarted desires and ideas of death :

'I have begun to die
 For now at last I know
 That there is no escape
 From night'. (iii)

There is freshness and spontaneity in the group of poems entitled 'Parachute Battalion' and 'Laughing Blood' by Richard Spender, killed in the battle of Tunisia at the age of twenty-one. Never, since Rupert Brooke, was a poet more lavish in the giving of himself, more responsive to the beauty of the world surrounding him. The joys of youth, pure generous and ecstatic, are dominant themes of his poems. Yet as he was truly in love with life he was truly in love with death :

(i) For Christopher—Soldiers, *This Solitude* p. 42

(ii) Fever—Raiders Dawn.

(iii) The Sentry—ibid.

'Come we have lived life to the last stirring drop
Of the strange, deep-thrilling wine.
As we have lived
So let us die.
In high proud exultation
Let us repay
Laughing blood with spilt.' (i)

When this expansive mood passes, he has moments of disillusion :

'Hopes of light are gone
Of light, and some strange wonder
In an unseen star'. (ii)

Had he been spared a few more years in the company of his friends, his attitude, perhaps, would have changed ; he would have outgrown his buoyancy and youthfulness. He might have lost in freshness, but he would have gained in significance.

The more perfect the artist, says T. S. Eliot, the more completely separate in him will be 'the man who suffers and the mind which creates'. Not only has the poetry of this younger generation of poets an eternal plangent appeal,

'To pity and whatever moans in man
Before the last sea and the hapless stars',

But it remains an example of how suffering acts as the refining fire that produces the gold :

'Even the suffering is good,
there is pain if there is birth ;
Even the bomb is good,
There is hurt if there is love ;
Even the death is good,
there is death if there is life'. (iii)

We need the words and visions of those who are willing to suffer and endure, if it do but grant them some glimpse of ultimate reality. It is the greatest triumph of these poets that they can meet our need.

(i) The Young Soldier . . *The Times Lit. Supplmt.* Nov. , 1942

(ii) Ibid.

(iii) Poem, 1942, Peter Winckworth-*The Times Lit. Supplement*, Feb. , 1948

N. B. For some of the quotations reproduced above 'Poetry in War-time' by Tambimuttu (Faber & Faber) and 'Poems of this War' ed. by Patricia Ledward and Collin Strong (Cambridge University Press) have been frequently consulted. Besides, the different numbers of *Times Lit. Supplement*, the '*Poetry Review*' and '*English*' have been of great help to the writer in the preparation of this article.

MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

By ALAIN DANIELOU

LANGUAGE, like music, conveys ideas through a series of correlated sounds. In music, these sounds are differentiated only by their pitch and duration. In the spoken language they are differentiated by pitch, duration and articulation. Not everyone is aware that there can be no spoken utterance without a definite pitch. Each voice has one main or natural pitch. Thus some people express themselves in Sa (that is in C) others in Re (that is in D) others in Ni komal (that is B flat). There are, however, further differences of pitch which appear in the pronunciation of certain syllables, and which add to the meaning of words. It is not only in Chinese that a word changes its meaning according to the pitch of its syllables. This is a law for all language. And, although changes of pitch are utilised at their maximum in the languages in which words are mostly mono-syllabic, variations of pitch are found to exist, of necessity, in all spoken languages ; their use is not, however, usually properly classified in modern grammars. Starting on a journey, I spoke to a friend of my intention of boarding the Delhi express at Burdwan. "You will *never* be able to get in" he said. And to express his doubts he lowered the last syllable of the word 'never' by what musicians would call a minor third. "*Never* ?" I asked him. And, to show the surprise caused to me by his association of eternity and the Delhi express, I raised the second syllable of the word 'never' by a major tone. "Ne-ver" he said, showing his absolute conviction by keeping the second syllable of the word at the pitch of the first one. In this short exchange of views, we had used only one word. But the difference of pitch in the last syllable of this one word conveyed successively the additional ideas of doubt, of question, of certainty. In the utterance of this one word we had been using, in their simplest form, the three kinds of melodic movement which exist in music : the ascending, descending, and horizontal movement.

Spoken language usually extends over five notes, but, among these, three main pitches of sound are prominent. They are called, by the Sanskrit grammarians, udātta (raised), anudātta (lowered), and svarita (normal). Knowledge of these pitches is essential to determine the true intended meaning of the words in any language.

The whole of the language spoken upon the Earth is, according to the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, divided into four parts.

तदेतत्तुरीयं वाचां निरुक्तं यन्मनुष्या वदन्त्येतत्तुरीयं वाचोऽनिरुक्तं यत्पशवो ।
वदन्त्येतत्तुरीयं वाचोऽनिरुक्तं यद्वयांसि वदन्त्येतत्तुरीयं वाचोऽनिरुक्तं यदिदं क्षुद्रं
सरीसृपं वदन्ति ॥

Which means : “One quarter of language is articulate and is spoken by men. The three other quarters are inarticulate. One of these is spoken by mammals, one by birds, one by the vile reptiles.”

We see that from very early times the languages spoken by the animal kingdom were classified as belonging to the category of non-articulate language. By non-articulate language is meant a mode of expression of ideas through sounds which makes use of pitch, length, and rhythm, but drops the articulate element. Such a language is almost identical with music, and we should not be surprised to see that the Indian treatises on music always connect the different notes and intervals of musical scales with the cries of animals. The song of birds is the least articulate, the most musical, of the animal languages ; while the speech of the monkey, almost articulated, is the nearest to human speech.

In the Sanskrit language has been evolved a philosophy of the spoken sound which keeps a full account of its relations with music. This is why the Sanskrit theory of language is the most complete and logical theory of the spoken sound in existence. A number of ancient writers made a parallel study of the spoken and the musical language, the most famous of these being Nandikeśvara, whose luminous commentary on the Maheśvara Sūtra is the root of Vedānta. His parallel book on the philosophy of music is, unfortunately, not available today, but it is often quoted by other writers on music whose work allows us to understand this marvellous theory of sound, which links together with perfect cohesion mathematics, grammar, music and metaphysics.

Spoken language has at its disposal a very limited number of sound-elements. We possess only five places of articulation, and thus can utter only five kinds of pure vowels and five types of consonants. There exist, however, four additional vowels, two (ए and ओ) being combined sounds ; and two (ऐ and औ) mere diphthongs.

This brings the total number of the vowels to nine corresponding to the nine svaras, or notes, of music. Each of these vowels can be short, long, or extra-long ; each of them can have three pitches, being either raised, natural or lowered. This gives us 81 vowels. Each of these 81 vowels can further be pronounced naturally or nasally. This brings the total number of possible vowel-sounds to 162. Consonants, on the other hand, can be differentiated by the nature of the effort made to pronounce them in the same five places of articulation. Their number is usually considered by Sanskrit grammarians to be fifty-two. The numbers 81 and 52 are also of fundamental importance in music, since the basic relation between intervals, the comma diesis, or pramāṇa śruti, is equal to $81/80$ and brings about the division of the octave into the 52 intervals envisaged by physicists.

The total number of distinct simple sounds used in any language to express ideas is therefore the product of 162 vowels by 52 consonants ; that is merely 8, 424. This represents the total number of simple syllables which can be used in any language to form roots words. It has been observed however, that the number of the roots which correspond to really distinct ideas, and which are used for the formation of words in any language, hardly reaches a few hundreds. Similarly, although the number of theoretical modes or rāgas which can be used in music is considered to be above 16,000, the number of modes in actual use is hardly above 300.

The question which may be raised is where actually lies the demarcation line between music and language. Is music merely able to arouse sensations of pleasure and displeasure, or can it convey to our mind ideas or emotions as precise and definite as those conveyed by articulate words ? The general tendency of recent theorists of music is to attribute to musical sounds a mere power of suggestion, which only evokes in our minds some association ; association which may vary for different individuals. This is, indeed, a very low appreciation of the action of music, and if we were to accept that the meaning of music is a matter of purely personal reaction, we should be led to believe that the grave accents of a funeral march may appear to our neighbour intensely joyous, a supposition which obviously is absurd. The present misconception of the exact meaning of musical sounds is probably due to the use, now prevalent, of very inadequate and incomplete scales. All the ancient peoples held that musical

sounds conveyed exact meanings which could be as precise as the meanings of articulate words.

The differences which may appear to exist in the understanding different people have of the meaning of music are not due to a lack of accuracy in the musical language itself, but merely to the incapacity of certain individuals to perceive its meaning. Their analysis of the impression music creates upon them thus becomes mere guessing, as if the musical sounds were the words of a foreign language. We can understand their difficulty by comparing them to the colour-blind man who sees a brilliantly coloured picture as if it were monochrome. Such is also the case of the dull mind which is unable to perceive subtle ideas, although these may be most clearly expressed.

The Indian musical theory of the 'śrutis'—or intervals is a complete theory of true musical language. In this theory the arithmetical ratios, which rule musical intervals, are shown to be connected with different mental tendencies or moods, which range from extreme pain to extreme joy. It is these mental tendencies which, combined together, give rise to *ideas*. The Hindu theory of sound thus shows music as the link between abstract and concrete notions. This link, spoken of as Nada or Madhyama Vak, is experienced by us in the form of feelings; while the concrete ideas are expressed in the grosser form of uttered words, called Vaikhari Vak. The number of distinct expressions, which any untrained ear can easily perceive within one octave, is said to be only twenty-two; but this number can, with some training, be easily raised to sixty-six, and even higher. This main division into twenty-two and sixty-six śrutis was recognized already by Kohala, who is said to be one of the four sons of Bharata Muni, and is one of the earliest Sanskrit writers on music. The śrutis or 'musical words' are further said to have distinct meanings in the different octaves. They were thus given different names by the Hindus as by the Greeks.

During the last century, a gap seemed to open in almost every country between musicians, who asserted that music was an accurate and stable mode of expressing ideas, and theorists, who, as we have already seen, inclined to believe that music was a mere mode of suggestion, conveying different ideas to different minds. It is only recently that practical instruments for the measurement and production of accurate musical intervals have permitted really convincing

experiments to be made. These experiments seen, so far, to support completely the ancient theory of the definite meaning of the śrutis or musical 'words'. Certain relations of sounds have been shown to produce for all hearers unmistakable impressions of joy or of sorrow, of fear, of fierceness, of tenderness or passion, very much like the verses of a poem. These expressions can be produced by purely mechanical means and are seen to be the result of definite ratios of vibrations with which the personality of the musicians has nothing to do. These observations may open new horizons on the real basis of the phenomenon of language, because, if purely arithmetical ratios of sounds create, in music, definite meanings, definite 'words', there may also exist, for articulate words, meanings inherent in their very sound as was claimed by the ancient Sanskrit grammarians. Articulate sounds can thus be found to convey, of themselves, a meaning which is not a mere convention, but is the necessary result of their sonority. And this will show us that the celebrated commentary of Nandikeśvara on the Maheśvara sūtra, which derives the meaning of every word from the sound of its component letters, is not merely a fascinating philosophical speculation, but represents the most accurate explanation of the nature of language. Any linguistic or grammatical theory, which does not take into account the natural meaning of words and sounds, should, therefore, be considered incomplete. Many are the poets who knowingly or unknowingly, make use of certain letters to convey certain moods and emotions. The use by Tulsi Das of palatal sounds to express fierceness, and of dentals and labials to express tenderness is famous in Hindi poetry. Thus the poet expresses the attack of the horde of monkeys and bears in hard consonants, saying :

मर्कट विकट भट जुटत कटत न लटत तन जर्जर भण ।

But the gentle breeze, flowing near the lamenting Rāma, is described in soft consonants :

सीतल मंद सुगंध सुभाऊ । संतत बहइ मनोहर वाऊ ।

कुहु कुहु कोकिल धुनि करही । सुनि ख सरस ध्यान मुनि टरही ।

In these last two verses we have only one palatal sound which appears at the end when the voice of the *kokila* breaks (टरही) the meditation

of the sages. The fact that most human beings are trained to perceive the articulated form, rather than the melodic form of language, does not mean that music is less accurate but only that it is more abstract than language. Intonation, pitch, and rhythm, are the substratum of all spoken language ; yet they can be properly analysed only in relation to the science of music.

Speech should thus be envisaged as a particularised form of music, as a part of the musical language, which contains spoken language and has a much wider reach and power. We may easily observe that a man whom hard words leave unmoved may easily lose his courage before inarticulate shrieks, the power of which is, by the way, often made use of with great success by beings of a weaker sex. Similarly, a man who remains unaffected by argument may well surrender to the tenderness of lovely sounds.

The notions expressed by musical sounds are seen to be wider, although less differentiated, than those conveyed by articulate sounds. The 'words' of music, are less numerous than articulate words, but convey richer meanings. Such was said to be the language of the higher beings, of the Angels and of the Seers, in the first ages.



FIRST THOUGHTS OF INDIA

By DENNIS GRAY STOLL

My first contact with India was, in the neat Bengali phrase, *moné moné* (through the mind). Necessarily it was based on second-hand knowledge through books and personal intuition. But it was a genuine experience that set me vibrating within, revealing much to me of a great people and a great country.

Before I came to India, my reading and the many good Indian friends I had made in England, had shown me a vigorous pattern of life, a culture warm and fertile with the genius of the human spirit and Mother Earth. It was a society very acceptable to me though different from my own.

Early this year I arrived in Bengal to see this pattern of the mind take shape in fact, turning in living facets of humanity like a variegated kaleidoscope. Ever since my five senses have been busy confirming and correcting preconceived ideas. Much of Bengal has come to meet me like an old friend ; but there are other things, of course, that have proved unexpected and strange.

The villages are exactly as I had imagined them. Clusters of fan-spread palms, scarlet splashed *simul* trees and dark shady pools. Little bamboo, mud, matting and thatch homes rising from the soil, hidden within each a peasant woman's busy world of family, kitchens and motherhood. Every village has its problems of growth out of a primitive life of pitiful frugality. Yet every village is potentially rich, with its heritage of cultural simplicity to treasure with pride, with its power to conjure its sustenance from the earth. The peasant stock of Bengal has proved again and again its admirable capacity to endure reverses with patient gentleness. They have stubborn strength like the persistent drone of Indian sunlight. They are the meek who will one day inherit their own earth.

On my second day in Bengal, by a happy chance, I was privileged to meet Mahatma Gandhi. This gave me a definite introduction to India. One has to open a conversation with a nation somewhere, and I was indeed fortunate to begin with a revered figure so close to the people's heart. Later on I looked forward to meeting other leaders of thought, representing the many varied aspects of their country's aspirations.

With thousands of reverent humble people in a mood of quiet-

ness, I joined Gandhiji's prayer meeting at Sodepur. Our voices rose and fell to the lilt of the *Bhajan* responses, pulsing with beautiful and simple expressions of faith, accompanied by the rhythmic purl of instruments and clapping of hands. It seemed to me that the congregation was united in the corporate feeling of human souls together, sons and daughters of Mother India reaching out their hands in worship of the World Mother.

Gandhiji impressed me as a true peasant son, his feet firmly planted on the earth's immediate issues, his eyes fixed on the ideal and distant stars of God. His sensitive and expressive eyes beamed on me through his steel-rimmed spectacles glistening in the sun.

He opened our conversation with the shrewd good-humoured comment : "I hear you are a lover of peace. Of course, there are pacifists *and* pacifists."

His concise English was clear and straight to the point. He struck me as being purposeful in argument, his mind steady on its course like the needle of a compass.

A worldwide reputation for saintliness has not prevented him from being more practical and sensible than most politicians. He has a perfect focus of what is wrong with India's 700,000 villages, and advocates co-operative schemes for restoring them to health. He recognises that peasants are the roots and sap of the country. Unhealthy roots produce poor crops.

Obviously the god of mass-production has not persuaded him to bow down to the dialectical dogmas of a swift Industrial Revolution. Gandhiji has the modesty to learn from the mistakes as well as the successes of the West. Almost alone among the paper planners for India's future he has faced up to the fact that food cannot be grown in tins. A city factory may turn out millions of tin cans a day, but the cans will go empty if the village dies of neglect.

Gandhiji believes that the preservation of village India is a spiritual as well as an economic necessity. The big industrialised city unit drains the country of its rivers of peace and everyday stability. The peasant, compelled by poverty to work in a slum area, is a restless and unsatisfied man. He is lost in the teeming chaos of an alien urban environment. He is helpless in the festering squalor which facile imitation of some less desirable aspects of the Industrial Revolution has imposed upon him. He turns in despair to vulgar artificia-

lities and ways of life that are substitutes for his real spiritual background and social traditions.

Through the pitiful darkness of the city slum, the rustic common sense of Mahatma Gandhi's message shines like clear sharp stars.

I am not one of those who credit Gandhiji with a monopoly of God's truth and wisdom. But I do think that he is a shrewd far-sighted patriotic son of India. His conception of the country's agriculturalists and craftsmen progressively adopting machinery at a pace strictly conditioned by the basic needs of the home consumer is highly sane. He is all for self-sufficiency and putting first things first. He would provide the Indian housewife with necessities before luxuries, with good clothes and food for her family before lipsticks and outings to the cinema. She would have electric light and cookers in the kitchen, if Gandhiji had his way, long before a car appeared in the garage.

Gandhism and science are popularly misrepresented as being incompatible. As I see it, the reverse is the case. I would go so far as to suggest that neither can survive without the other. The main difference between Gandhism and science is a matter of stress on essentials and emphasis on values.

"Machinery has its place," the Mahatma declared. "It has come to stay."

One of the most curious and unexpected things that have struck me about India, is that it is not the saint who refuses to meet the great man of science half way, but the great man of science who refuses to meet the saint. A leading Indian scientist told me : "Gandhi's ideas are all bunk !" Some of their clashes of opinion are quaintly paradoxical. For instance, the Mahatma advocates the spreading of India's crafts and industries widely over the land, because this policy seems to him conducive of social happiness and health. The scientist, on the other hand, favours the concentration of industry in large city areas. This appears to me a suicidal policy in an age menaced by atomic bombs. Again the saint is surely the more practical man ?

It has been a shock to find modern Indian scientists taking the dust off the feet of the *swami* called What-was-good-enough-for-Europe-yesterday-is-good-enough-for-India-tomorrow. I envisage

India tomorrow as a country not content blindly to copy the past, whether of East or West. I see old Mother India as a peasant mother in Renaissance, a country rooted in her own mature traditions, but spilling over with youth's life and fresh ideas. It is in this faith that I am continuing my conversation with India, passing on from my first thoughts to wider revealment, I trust, and deeper understanding.

REVIEWS

POEMS OF INDIA : by Members of the Forces. O. U. P. Rs. 3/-

IN a hundred pages or so of extraordinary varied interest the Oxford University Press editors present us with specimens of the writings of between fifty and sixty poets in uniform, all of them young, drawn from almost every rank of the Army and Air force. The volume is one more proof, if any is still needed, that the Goddess of Poetry does not sit with ebbing vitality in any ivory tower, but walks the dusty highway of life "to warm, to comfort and command" an increasing following of devotees. The poems are divided according to subject into six sections, of which Part One, "Indian Scene" is much the longest, and in many ways the most important and significant. A short section which maintains a particularly high standard is that entitled "Ex-India" inspired by Mediterranean and Near Eastern scenes. Sections on "War" and "Death" are inevitable, but the poets do not seem to have found any strikingly fresh or memorable way to enshrine those perpetual mysteries of darkness and pain. Nevertheless the book is very moving, and it is enheartening to be told in the introduction of large amount of good material rejected in the final choice for lack of space. We hope that the reception of the book will be such as to encourage the publishers to repeat the experiment.

M. S.

OUR BEGGAR PROBLEM : A Symposium ed. by J. M. Kumarappa
Padma Publications, Bombay. Rs. 10/-.

ELEVEN chapters by writers who speak with the authority of expert knowledge in their fields provide a most valuable conspectus of the modern beggar problem of India in all its aspects. For beggary as a *problem* is essentially modern ; the extension and degeneration of the tradition of religious mendicancy is one of the many bitter fruits of the alien tree of capitalistic industrialism. The volume supplies a real need by bringing together in convenient compass the most relevant

facts on which intelligent public opinion may be formed and a constructive programme of action based. First come several chapters devoted to a study of the beggars themselves—the different types of beggars and the causes which lead them to beggary; their psychological traits, physical disabilities, and—most interesting and suggestive—the professional organisation and discipline that exists in varying degrees among them. The next section studies the attitude in historical and modern times of the ordinary citizen toward the beggar, and the extent to which the former has been prepared to adopt Scientific philanthropy in place of indiscriminate individual charity. The last three chapters deal with the steps actually taken by public bodies in different parts of India towards a solution of the problem, discuss their limitations in theory and practice, and put forward suggestions for future public action. An outstandingly interesting chapter is that by Mr. John Barnabas on "Legislation relating to Beggary", with its preliminary well-documented discussion of how far medicancy is actually sanctioned by the religions of India, and its able analysis of the significant features of provincial and municipal Acts. Dr. Kumarappa's closing plea for measures of social security establishes in detail his opening contention that the root cause of pauperism as a social problem is "the disruption of the joint family system and the removal of production from the home to the factory." In view of the facts he marshals we not only agree with him that "Social security is only a half-way house"; we also feel that he has understated the urgency of a radical transformation of our present social and economic chaos if this among other evils is to be brought under control.

M. S.

CHRISTIANITY: Its Economy and Way of Life, by J. C. Kumarappa.
Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Rs. 1/8/-.

THIS booklet is a collection of addresses and essays composed for various occasions on the economic and social consequence of the Gospel of Jesus when accepted in its pristine purity. A couple of sentences from an address at the Parliament of Religions, Bombay, in May 1936, indicate with fair accuracy its central thesis: "Christianity has developed into a smug, comfortable, selfish and individualistic religion, seeking for its own gain; while the religion of Jesus requires for its growth the background of collective social order, such as we find Hinduism has developed in India". The goal is to be attained by an application of the social and economic doctrines of Gandhiji. Searching and stimulating as much of the writing is, there are portions which were perhaps not worth preserving in book form, and one may wish that the author could have devoted the space at his command to a fuller and more unified treatment of an exceedingly important subject.

M. S.

THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS : by H. P.
Blavatsky. (Reprint) International Book House Ltd.,
Bombay. As. 10.

THIS essay, originally published in three instalments in Madame Blavatsky's magazine 'Lucifer' in 1887-8 claims to establish that a true understanding of the Christian Gospels is not possible without the aid of esoteric occult theosophy. It is mainly occupied with a discussion, learned and not without interest, of the pre-Christian history and meaning of the title Christos (alternatively Chrestos) applied in the New Testament to Jesus of Nazareth. The conclusion may be summarised conveniently in the authors own words : "Occultism pure and simple finds the same mystic elements in the Christian as in other faiths, though it rejects as emphatically its dogmatic and *historic* character." (Italics original).

It is doubtful whether the cause of charity and truth will be served by the reprinting of such a book at this date. Artistically it is not worth preserving ; its cruel jibes against orthodox Christianity, never more than partially true, are much less justifiable today ; its central assertion is entirely unproved. It was quite natural that the followers of Jesus, in their efforts to interpret the impact of his personality on their lives, should make use of categories of thought and language familiar in their day and rooted deep in the religious instincts of man ; It does *not* follow that the personality itself is a fiction of the "euhemerising" imagination. On the contrary the most exhaustive scholastic research of the last half-century has only more strongly established the *general* authenticity of the Gospels (not necessarily of every incident or detail) as a record of historical *fact*. Moreover, the heart of the Christian religion (and every real Christian of whatever theological colour knows it) is *not* in dogma, theology, interpretation, which are secondary or less than secondary. The heart of Christianity is in a man, Jesus of Nazareth, who in and through the particularities of life in provincial Palestine, and crucifixion 'under Pontius Pilate', opened a window into Eternal Reality. Many Christians do indeed need to have "the dead letter sacrificed to the Spirit of Truth", as Madame Blavatsky writes—but it must be the Spirit of *Truth*.

M. S.

POVERTY AND SOCIAL CHANGE—A study in the Economic Reorganisation of Indian Rural Society : by Tarlok Singh. Longmans,
Green & Co., Ltd. pp 200. Price Rs. 3/8/-.

PLANNING in India, strangely enough, has become only a pleasant pastime for professional essay-writers. Publications on planning and reconstruction are therefore received by readers with a natural doubt and scepticism.

The book under review is a departure from the traditional line of thinking on India's agricultural planning and covers entirely new ground. The author states very apologetically, and somewhat unjustifiably, that the book "does not set out

to be a plan" but "offers a frame work of general ideas and principles which serve as a preface to a plan." The difference between a plan, and the preface to a plan is indeed a very thin one, and the author deserves to be congratulated for this excellent treatise in which he has out-lined a plan for eradicating the mass poverty in India. The whole approach to the study of the problem is not only new but also highly objective and realistic.

The cause of India's economic problem, is the deep poverty of her millions of people. And "by far the greater part of India's poverty is rural." The eradication of Indian poverty is therefore only possible if and when planned and systematic efforts are made for a complete re-organisation of village-life and a re-organisation of village agriculture. In these days of large-scale plans for the expansion of industries, it comes with a shock of relief that "rural poverty is not a social disease which large-scale public expenditure can cure, nor, is it a problem which can be met through the indirect influences of industrial expansion." Mr. Singh deserves high praise for having put the problem of rural economy in its proper setting.

After analysing the causes of poverty on traditional lines the author rejects the piece-meal, so-called palliative measures which have more often been advocated than adopted for the improvement of village agriculture. The consolidation of holdings, the law of primogeniture, nationalisation of peasant rights, and co-operative farming in the technical sense, have, at best, very limited possibilities, and if a radical change is to be effected in rural life, then a new approach is necessary. The author's suggestion is joint village management.

One cannot but admit that joint village management as advocated by the author has certain possibilities. The scheme does not envisage the transfer of the ownership of land from the individual to a common unit. To that extent it does away with the necessity for such revolutionary change as is imposed in a plan for the collectivisation of land. Yet for all practical purposes, the scheme retains the advantages of collective farming. Another advantage seems to be that for an experimental beginning no financial committment on the part of the state is necessary. Joint village management is just a change in the technique of cultivation. Only at a later stage when cultivation on the basis of a large farm has made some progress, the problem of the availability of capital will begin to assert itself.

Theoretically, the scheme, as envisaged by the author is so sound, that its very perfection is its own imperfection. It is true that the author himself has anticipated some of the possible flaws and loopholes in his arguments, but one is inclined to believe that he has somewhat under-estimated the difficulties that are likely to be confronted in the practical field. Will the villagers agree to join in any scheme of joint village management? If they do, well and good. But if they do not—what next? Will the author rely on moral persuasion or insist on legislative compulsion? Anyway, it will be worth trying to experiment in selected areas on the lines advocated by Mr. Singh, and if results prove encouraging, the field of experiments can be gradually extended.

The title of the book appears to be slightly misleading. The problem of poverty in India is clear enough, but it is not quite clear what the relationship between poverty and social change precisely is. Should we eradicate poverty first to bring in the necessary social change, or should we go the other way round, bringing in social change first to eradicate poverty later on. In other words, will the ordinary villager be willing or able to enter into the cooperative ideals which this scheme implies, unless he has been influenced by social changes? On the other hand, the motive power for effecting social changes is lacking unless the new scheme for overcoming poverty can be shown to be successful. If poverty and social change are both cause and effect, then the whole impact of economic reform will not be felt for a long time until both bring to bear upon each other the full play of their mutual influence.

K. N. B.

*IN THE DEPTHS OF SOVIET RUSSIA : A YOUNG WOMAN'S
ADVENTURES*—Published by the Indo-Polish Library.

Sole Distributors : Padma Publications, Bombay.

Price Re. 1/12/-.

THIS very badly printed, seemingly insignificant pamphlet of 80 pages, makes one sit up. The author, who remains unnamed, is "a Polish Secondary School teacher" and had the misfortune of spending two years in various Soviet prisons, including Siberia, when in 1939, as a direct result of the infamous pact signed by Stalin on Aug. 23, "one half of Poland was under the jackboot of Germany and the other half occupied by the U. S. S. R.". She got back her freedom in 1941, when the Polish-Russian Pact was signed. The book is published under the authority of the Indo-Polish Library and perhaps, therefore, its authenticity cannot be doubted. And yet, the revelations seem incredible. At times, I wondered, if I were not reading the United Nations' prosecution charge against the Belsen monsters.

A suggestion : why should not the publishers send copies of the book to the representatives of the 51 Nations, now confabulating in London, on the board of the UNO?

A. K. C.

A HISTORY OF JAPAN. By Dr. Asit Mukerji. Published by Susil Gupta, 1, Wellesley Street, Calcutta. Price Rs. 4/8.

THERE has been of late a growing interest amongst us to know more about Japan than what has been available through Reuter's press messages and the inspired articles in American and English pictorial magazines. The enterprising Calcutta publisher, Susil Gupta, deserves our thanks for bringing out a book like this. The author, Dr. Asit Mukerji, is a keen student of world history and had served in the Japanese Consulate in Calcutta for some years. He can

therefore be trusted to give us a dependable book on Japan. This he has, within limits. His book deals not merely with chronology of events but also attempts to interpret the national mind and the culture of the Japanese people. Of the twenty-one chapters that go to make the book, no less than eleven are devoted to her religion, literature, arts, etc. It is as it should be.

But this history of Japan tells us little or nothing about modern Japan, and one wonders whether the author would not have done better to find a different title for his book. His history stops with 1918; that is, just as our curiosity is aroused, he draws the curtain. He avoids "any discussion of subsequent events" on the plea that "the perspective of history is difficult, for the factors which have gone into the making of events in the last two decades are still so unsettled that they do not permit of an adequate historical estimate." And yet it has been held that the true aim of historical investigation is "the explanation and elucidation of the present." The perspective of history is difficult but without it we have either mere chronology or archaeology. As Croce said, all history is contemporary history and all true historians, willy-nilly, philosophers. Dr. Mukerji gives us nothing of Japan's contemporary history and his book is like a play without its fifth act. A true lover of Japan, he has perhaps fought shy of telling us of Tanaka and Toyama, of the Kokushon-sha and the Kokuryukai, of all that made Japan like a monomaniac strutting and fretting its hour upon the stage of world history, and its tale full of sound and fury...

A Boswell makes a serviceable hystriographer but, alas, an inadequate historian.

A. K. C.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR. Vols. I & II. By A. M. Reid. Published by Susil Gupta. 1, Wellesley Street, Calcutta. Price Rs. 4/8 each.

THIS is a handy chronology of the Second World War which is due to conclude officially, within the next few months, even though the British and the Dutch militia, aided by their Japanese prisoners of war, will have mowed down by then thousands of Indonesians, for attempting to implement one of the fundamental provisions of the Atlantic Charter in their part of the world. The volumes are carefully planned and read well. The second volume reaches upto the Pearl Harbour incident. We hope the later volumes will bring the account upto-date and make it more objective too. Mr. Reid is the News Editor of the Calcutta "Statesman" and needless to say, he knows well the use of scissors and paste where his news is concerned. But what about his views? Mr. Reid is a "friend of the Soviets". And if he does not assume the axiomatic infallibility of his hero, M. Stalin, he nonetheless tries to prove that the Marshal has been perpetually infallible. In his "sketchy picture of post-war Europe", he expends no less than ten pages of unconvincing dialectics to support Russia's great betrayal on August 23, 1939. Mr. Reid has taken great pains to prove his own country's perfidy,—the world would readily grant him that,—and to defend, with gusto, Stalin's pact

with Hitler, on grounds of expediency. For such a bitter critic of Munich, it is hardly a convincing defence and his polemic is apt to pall. The book, useful as it is, would have been better had its author been less anxious in the expression of his personal views and bias.

A. K. C.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS : by S. N. Agarwal.

Padma Publications. Bombay. Price Re. 1/-. Pp. 55.

PRINCIPAL Agarwal has been doing a distinct service to the country by explaining Gandhiji's economic and political ideas in terms suitable to the modern mind. His exposition of a Gandhian plan, and more recently of a Gandhian constitution for India have gained deserved popularity.

In the present book, he has tried to do something more modest. Gandhiji's Constructive Programme now covers many items. Shri Agarwal has chosen from among them a few items which are specially suitable for students who might wish to take up some form of active social service. In his own college at Wardha he has also helped in the practical organization of such work among his students. The book therefore carries with it not merely the element of personal conviction but also the stamp of practical experience. In course of the discussions, he has also tried to explain clearly the logical basis of Gandhiji's emphasis on certain types of economic activity in the country. As such, the book will prove to be a practical guide as well as a brief introduction to Gandhism for students.

A set of questions has been added at the end of the book, which everybody will find helpful in gathering first-hand knowledge about rural economic conditions.

Nirmal Kumar Bose.

SWARAJYA SASTRA : The Principles of a Non-Violent Political

Order, by Vinoba Bhave. Translated in English by Bharatan

Kumarappa. Padma Publications. Bombay.

THE present booklet is a translation of certain notes prepared on the fundamentals of politics by Shri Vinoba, while he was in jail. Basic questions like those dealing with the relation between the State and the people, or the various forms of government have been dealt with ; while a passing critical examination has also been made of forms of organization associated with Nazism, Fascism and Russian Communism. The author has then proceeded to describe the nature of a State under a social condition ruled by non-violence. He has shown how such a society should be organised economically on the basis of self-sufficient rural units ; and what the character of interdependence of such units and of States also should be like. The fundamental principles of Satyagraha are later on described. The author has tried to show that common people can attain their liberty, only by the method of non-violence.

The treatment is not of uniform quality throughout. Some statements have been made, and hints thrown, without the reason being given for them. But the specially valuable part of the book consists of those pages where the economic and political implications of non-violence are described. According to Shri Bhavé, in that society every man shall 'work honestly according to ability and commensurate recompense and equal protection shall be extended to all, as in the family'. The rule of 'good men and elders' should also be assured in such a society. We are however, unfortunately, not told what steps should actually be taken to ensure that the rule of society will rest with those desirable people to the exclusion of more selfish and aggressive ones.

We sincerely hope that Shri Bhavé will find time to develop his thoughts on the subject of political organization more fully, and give us the results in future ; for we expect much from a mind so original, at the same time so practical, as his own.

Nirmal Kumar Bose.

RELIGION AND MODERN DOUBTS : By Swami Nirvedananda.

Price Rs. 3/-. Published by Vidyamandir, Dhakuria.

IN these days of apathy to spiritual issues all talk of religion is held up to ridicule. But without religion where does the present human race go to ? To destruction and doom. To-day what the human race needs is a "spiritual readjustment of its outlook on life" and the author believes that "religion is able to show the way out".

Analysing the evils of the modern age, the author finds that what we lack is a dynamic and well-directed will. We have forgotten our true nature which is divine. There is, it seems, no conflict between Science and Religion on these matters. In the chapter, "Shaking of Hands" he argues that "science and religion need no longer be looked upon as belonging to opposite camps. Rather, it may be expected that they will come closer together in the near future and pledge their amity by a hearty shaking of hands." (p. 40).

"Religion and Modern Doubts" is also a well-written chapter, though one of the first victims of modern doubts has been religion itself. The Swami, on the other hand, argues that it is religion alone that can make sense of and satisfy all modern doubts. But one has to accept the following remark of the Swami with caution—"Religion has the fitness to survive the onslaughts of reason."

"Vedanta and Universal Religion" explains briefly the fundamental concepts of the Vedanta. The author believes that the Vedanta can lead mankind to the realisation of a universal religion. The true message of the Vedanta is "the central unity beneath the diversities of Religion."

The get-up and the printing of the book is good. There should have been an "Index" at the end of the book.

Benoy G. Ray.

EVERYDAY PSYCHO-ANALYSIS : by Girindra Sekhar Bose, M.B., D.Sc.

Published by Susil Gupta, 1, Wellesley Street, Calcutta. Price Rs. 6/-.

DR. G. BOSE is an eminent psycho-analyst. The book under review contains lectures on psycho-analysis that Dr. Bose delivered to lay audiences at different times. Psycho-analysis is a vast study that comprises many topics under its scope. Its relation with business, child study, sex, crimes and dreams is very intimate. It is only fitting that Dr. Bose should arrange the lectures under such diverse headings as are shown in the table of contents. Each chapter is interesting to read and the speaker has never forgotten his hearers. It is true that the "personal touch" between the author and the audience has in many cases led to the proper understanding of the subjects. Dr. Bose is mainly a Freudian and his explanation of abnormal phenomena are mostly on Freudian lines. In the chapter named "Conjugal Quarrels" he has scientifically analysed the causes of quarrels between husbands and wives and has frankly confessed, "I know of no royal road to happiness in married life. I cannot offer any panacea to the unfortunate sufferers" p. 89. The author has in a masterly fashion delineated the topic of dreams. He has freely discussed the various problems that are relevant to dreams. The last chapter has been somewhat sketchy. A short account of the main theories of Prof. Freud would, I believe, remove this defect.

The paper, printing and get-up of the book are excellent. But the pagination seems to be defective.

Benoy G. Ray.

THE CRIMSON THORN, IN ENGLISH FIELDS, SNOW AND SAND, BLOW NO BUGLES : by John Gawsworth. Published by

Susil Gupta, 1, Wellesley St., Calcutta. Price Rs. 3/-each.

MR. GAWSWORTH is not altogether unfamiliar to the reading public in India. Many of the poems, most of them lyrics, in these volumes were published before, others are freshly minted, including some that were written in uniform. Mr. Gawsworth is amazingly fecund and can turn every occasion to verse, and though war-conditioned, temperamentally and technically he does not seem to be 'modern'. It is of *The Eternal Themes* he writes :

Love, Life and Death are the eternal themes,
The nearest, and the dearest, and the best ;
From the Beginning, visionings and dreams
Singled the Saint and Seer from the rest.

A little light each generation throws
Upon the mysteries with its own art :
But still the Secret's kept : the sleeping rose
Harbours it safely in its petalled heart.

Love, Life and Death ! I, in my paltry turn,
 Striking to light one taper in my Time,
 Publish their motions—all I have seen burn
 Within my lamp—and kill them in my rhyme.

The poem is its own comment. In spite of the long list of reviews and testimonials his work seems to be wanting in concentration. It fails to embody or suggest any attitude to life by which it can hope to be remembered. It has lyricism, of a sort, but to describe him, as the blurb does, as "probably the most distinguished lyrical poet of his generation" is to make a claim so excessive as to be ridiculous. But Mr. Gawsorth is a poet, one of our minor and younger poets. Like many of his friends he too wants "to write with integrity". Let us hope he will one day succeed in doing what he wants to do. As it is he appears—judging from the photograph—to have

In a fierce time a gentle face
 And a consoling verse.

It would have been better if these volumes had been put together. Separately the price is prohibitive.

50 MODERN POEMS BY 40 FAMOUS POETS : Published by Susil Gupta,
 1, Wellesley Street, Calcutta. Price Rs. 3/- only.

THE Volume is a paper-economy necessitated abridgment of *Fifty Years of Modern Verse* (Ed. by John Gawsorth). *Fifty Years* was a kind of supplement to Yeats' *Oxford Book* and wanted "to draw attention to the work of some additional writers of the same period". "It is now produced with the intention of giving pleasure to those readers in India who have been dissatisfied with the one face of the janus—head of British Poetry of the last quarter—century that so far they have been exhorted to regard." The selection does give an occasional pleasure, but those who were "dissatisfied with the one face" of contemporary poetry may not be satisfied with this face either. To describe all the writers included here as 'famous' is amusing. And if the writers are not famous, nor are their poems modern. Poems ? Alas, only a few are that, the rest is silence.

Uma Ghose.

YOUR TAGORE FOR TO-DAY : Edited by Hiran Kumar Sanyal.
 Published by People's Publishing House, Bombay.
 Price : One Rupee only.

THE brochure contains selections from the writings of Rabindranath Tagore. The Editor, Mr. H. K. Sanyal (a close student of Tagore's literature), has taken care to pick up his material mainly from Tagore's political writings in a chronological order. It is difficult for the student of Tagore's thought to be satisfied with such selections, scrappy and haphazard as they are. But even they have their value in

educating the reader. Tagore's observations generally attain the height and profundity of great truths, and they are often the sources of inspiration and the wells of accumulated wisdom. They lead the reader on to higher thinking and greater appreciation of the problems that confront us. Every stray thought of Tagore carries its own wholeness, and it stands as a challenge to inquisitive minds. They are scattered gems, so to say, which everyone would like to treasure for his own benefit.

The reviewer welcomes this brochure, particularly because it seeks to popularise Tagore's thought and to afford an opportunity to the English-reading public to know and to profit by Tagore's writings in Bengali. True, such a book of excerpts merely gives Tagore's summing up without his fascinating analysis, but Tagore's thought is likely to illumine every inquiring mind, it cleanses the dross and ignites the flame of thought. The brochure will, however, give an inkling to Tagore's pattern of thought and intensify the passion of the reader for a fuller knowledge of Tagore. That is a great service. It is not a mere rhetorical statement that Tagore is an invaluable guide to the understanding of the problems of the modern age. Accordingly, greater intimacy with Tagore is useful and necessary. The world is groping in darkness; it is looking out for a path-finder. Tagore, we believe, will be greatly helpful to us in this twilight.

The brochure deserves wide publicity, and the reviewer is glad to note that all profits from the sale of this book will go to the All-India Rabindranath Memorial Fund, Calcutta.

S. S.

RABINDRANATH GHARE-BAIRE (in Bengali) : By Renu Mitra.

Introduction by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty. General Printers and Publications Ltd., 119, Dhurrumtolla Street, Calcutta.

1951 B. S. pp. 104. Price Rs. 2/-

GHARE-BAIRE (Eng. tr. : "The Home and the World") is acclaimed by the European critics as the greatest of Tagore-novels. How sober, yet suggestive, were the words of W. B. Yeats written as late as in 1931, "I have found wisdom and beauty, or both, in your prose—*The Home and the World*". "The novel is more modern in tone than anything which Bengali fiction possesses even now", remarks another critic.

The author of this book under review has ably attempted a critical discussion of this Tagore-masterpiece. In her scope she is comprehensive, in treatment searching. The sober dignity that she maintains throughout is admirable.

Nirmalchandra Chattopadhyaya.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF LITERARY CRITICISM IN SANSKRIT :

by Mahamahopadhyaya Prof. S. Kuppuswami Sastri, M. A. With a
foreword by the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivas Sastri. Published
by the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute,
Madras. 1945. pp. 94. Rs. 2/-.

THE late Mm. Kuppuswami Sastri is wellknown to the world of scholars as a distinguished votary of Indian Culture and Indian Science and the philosophy of literary criticism in Sanskrit. In the booklet under review he has surveyed with the minute vision of a master all the problems that beset the path of a critic who is bent on reaching the citadel of poetic excellence.

In course of the four lectures which form the present booklet, Prof. Sastri's contention is to prove that the history of literary criticism in Sanskrit never shows any divorce nor any attempt at divorce or estrangement between critics and poets. On the other hand he has emphatically proved that Sanskrit literary criticism has ever stood for a synthesis. India has successfully realised a synthesis, of creation and criticism, of form and content, of literary law and liberty of speech and thought. In one word, synthesis is the watchword of Indian art-criticism. According to our learned Professor it is this synthesis that is the highway of highways in Indian literary criticism.

Prof. Sastri has very largely succeeded in his aim of objectivity, and he is to be congratulated on the lucidity of his analysis of the basic principles of Sanskrit literary criticism and on the cogent vigour of his style of presentation. A lucid exposition such as this ought to be of great value to the student in helping him to understand within a short compass the fundamental principles of criticism in Sanskrit Literature.

Nagendranath Chakravarty.



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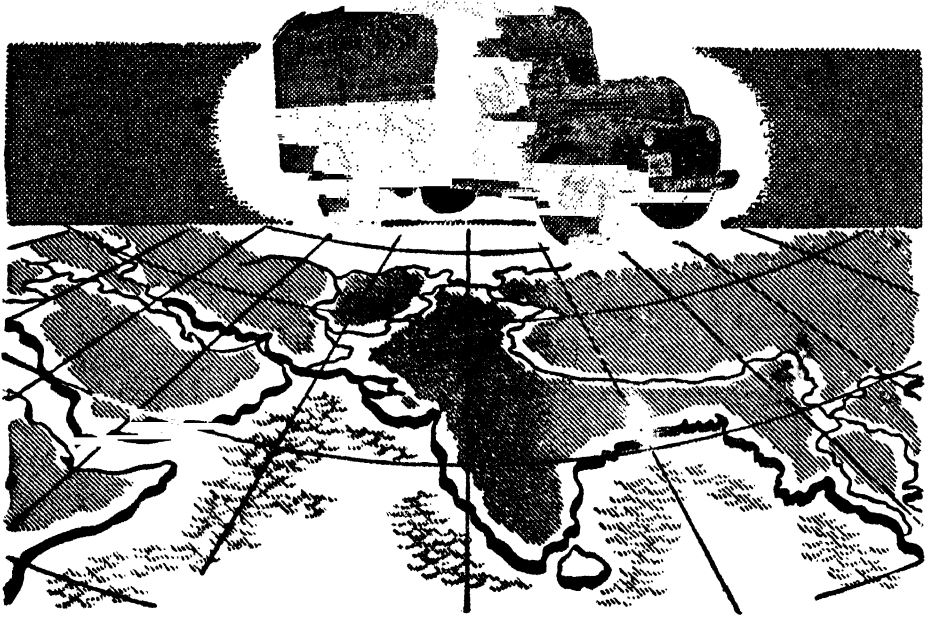
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